Cinderella

with the wooden slippers

Raymond F Keller

Cinderella With the Wooden Slippers

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Cinderella With the Wooden Slippers

by Raymond F. Keller

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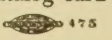

Maria de Vos and the author dedicate this book
to America and all Americans

Foreword

It does seem odd to me, as it probably will to you, that a sixty-year-old grandfather, whose entire career has been devoted to the rubber industry, should be writing a book of this kind. I should like to have it understood from the beginning that I am not a professional writer, and that you will find here perhaps an unusual story, but one that is nevertheless quite plainly told.

The story is about Maria de Vos, who is called "Rie" more often than "Maria." Until about two years ago she lived on the picturesque little Dutch Island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee, off the coast of Holland in the North Sea, where life is very different indeed. The events which you are going to read about happened because Maria wrote a letter which was published in an American magazine. A friend of ours, Mrs. Joseph Leeder of Columbus, Ohio, wrote an answer to the letter; later we heard about Rie from Mrs. Leeder; the United States Rubber Company got involved because one of its officers had to come to the rescue when certain events happened—of course we all wanted to get involved, because Maria is a most unusual and delightful person —and eventually she came to America.

During the summer of 1950, quite a few people met Maria, and to answer their questions about her I decided to write a "Christmas letter" during my fall vacation. While packing the car for the trip, I added something never before included in our vacation equipment—a battered portable typewriter for my wife Dorothy to use, and for myself pencils, pads, erasers, a dictionary, a thesaurus, and a clipboard. My wife edited, corrected and translated my almost unintelligible scribble into neat, typewritten pages. I am an atrocious speller and my punctuation is terrible. If she minded spending so much of her vacation in this way, she never said so.

When we returned to our home in Connecticut, we went into our attic and snipped silhouettes to illustrate the "letter"—which

had somehow gotten as long as a pamphlet-size book—from books belonging to our daughters Ann and Mary. We hope that we are not going to be the ones who will have to answer our grandchildren's questions about the missing pictures. The typed pages and the silhouettes were mounted on cardboards and then photographed and printed by offset.

Only two hundred copies of the simple little paper-covered book were printed and the plates were destroyed. Requests for additional copies quickly exhausted the supply. Pressure from friends and even strangers to put the story in book form was strong. They said that the story would be good for all Americans —to see through Maria's eyes the thousands of blessings that we enjoy daily but take too much for granted. And, in the meantime, another important chapter in Maria's life had been added, without which the original was a less complete story.

So here is the story—with excerpts from Maria's diary and letters which she kindly made available, and letters loaned by Mrs. Leeder.

R. F. K.

Acknowledgment

This story could not have been written without the valuable contribution of many people. The author wishes to thank the *Reader's Digest*, Pleasantville, New York, for permission to reproduce Maria's letter published in the February, 1947, issue; also, to Gimbel Brothers, Philadelphia, for the use of material regarding The Holland Fair. He also deeply appreciates the interest and assistance of the members of his family, of his many friends and business associates, in the preparation of this book.

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Cinderella With the Wooden Slippers

ONE

Maria Meets a G.I.

On a February morning in 1945, Maria de Vos was on a ladder whitewashing the little kitchen leading to the stable. The small white structure, which was her dislocated home, was actually a small rentmaster's combination stable and living quarters on a castle estate in the Dutch Province of Limburg. The white house was located at the beginning of a lane leading to the castle—off a main highway, at the Meuse (Maas) River, which separates Holland from Germany.

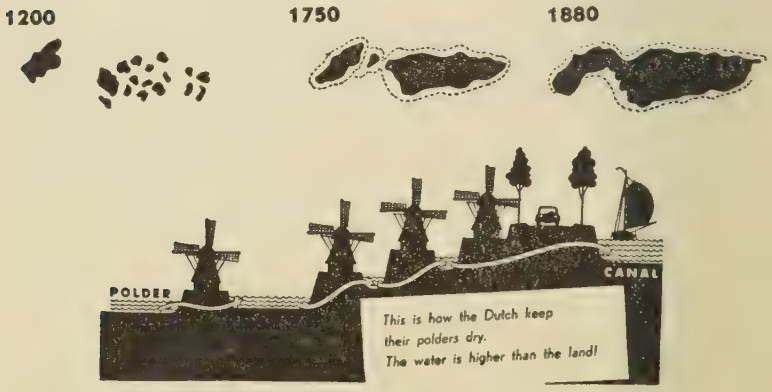
Maria hurried down from the ladder and laid her whitewash brush aside when she heard a motor outside the door. Some day she expected the American soldiers would follow or join the English army of liberation—but she was not expecting them on this particular morning. However, this was the day the first American Army unit reached this section of western Holland —a small advance demolition unit to clear out the German mine fields.

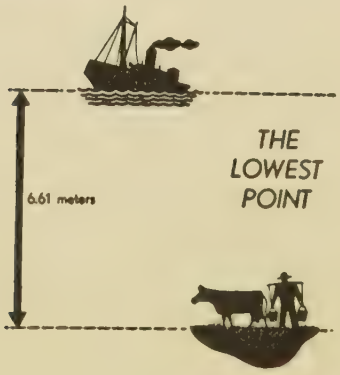
Corporal Robert Pierson, a wholesome, friendly, typical G.I., in his early twenties, stepped out of his army jeep and asked the Dutch girl for water for his buddies. He had no difficulty making himself understood, in English, for reasons you will soon learn. In fact, while helping the corporal get the water, Maria asked him in English if he had any American magazines he could lend her.

The evening of the same day, Corporal Pierson returned to the little rentmaster's cottage and stable with quite a few Ameri-

can magazines. Among them was a *Reader's Digest.* During the time it took to clear out the local mine area, the corporal called in his jeep every day for water, and the members of the demolition unit took up a collection of American books and magazines to leave with the pretty seventeen-year-old Dutch girl.

During one of Corporal Pierson's visits, Maria told him she was going to write a letter to the *Reader's Digest.* The corporal explained that it would be difficult or impossible for her to write a letter from that particular war area at that time. But, he told her, "Write your letter and I will mail it for you in one of my Army envelopes." It is this letter that is responsible for the





events of the next few years—events in both Holland and America.

Maria de Vos was not a native of the Dutch Province of Limburg, which borders on Germany and Belgium. Her home, where she was born June 13, 1927, was on the North Sea island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee, which lies about thirty miles west of Rotterdam.

The island is a perfect example of how, by dykes, canals, and windmill pumps, the Dutch keep their polders dry. The chart shows how they made the present island, as well as the depth from sea level to the little farms and villages behind the dykes.

Goeree-en-Overflakkee was at one time a compact group of tiny islands. In 1750 the island on the left was called Goeree and the larger island on the right was called Overflakkee. In 1880 they were tightly laced together, making one island about thirty miles from end to end, three miles at the throat, and ten miles across the greatest width. There are about a dozen villages on the island, the principal ones being Middelharnis and Ooltgensplaat, the latter with a population of about four thousand. Middelharnis might be called the county seat, for here are located the only bank and high school on the island.

Goeree-en-Overflakkee is one of a group of seven islands close together, and is part of the Province of South Holland because of its position in relation to the port of Rotterdam.

As you approach the island, your vistas are waterscapes such as you can see in no other part of the world. As the finely tinted distant dykes draw near at high tide you will say, "But this can't be. We are sailing above the roofs of the houses." This is not unlike the Mississippi River passing through New Orleans, where you look up from the streets to see the ships pass overhead. Only the industrious, eternally vigilant Dutchmen can keep the island from falling prey to the North Sea by windmill-pumping behind the encircling dykes. The outer dyke is called the "Watcher," the middle dyke the "Sleeper," and the inner dyke the "Dreamer." It would seem the dykes might well have been planned for a purpose other than the obvious one—to fortify the island against the inroads of what we know as the mod-

ern age. Perhaps the old, old fortress on the island has done that job best of all.

There today you will find the old, lingering customs hanging on like grim death, but slipping none the less among the younger generation. Here the wooden shoes and the colorful costumes are a common sight. The old women still wear the long, black, tight bodice and white shirt. On their heads they wear the special pattern of white lace cap which distinguishes them from other Netherlanders as natives of Goeree-en-Overflakkee. The married women's caps are of exquisite lace, while the widow wears a very plain white sheer cap—so that the unattached man will know she is eligible. They spend endless hours in front of their mirrors fixing their hair-do's. They lick the front bangs and make spirals on each side of their heads and then laboriously tuck the last remaining hairs under their caps. The women and girls wear heavy, coarse-woven wool dresses, heavy wool scarves, and knitted wool stockings.

The rich-and-poor caste system prevails in the Netherlands generally, and in Goeree-en-Overflakkee in particular. But, unlike America, there are no very rich or very poor on the island, as we know the extremes. Holland is a man's world to the nth degree, to a point difficult for the modern American to understand. Fathers of girls in the so-called peasant or industrious middle class stop their daughters' education at the top of American grade school level. That's enough "book learning" for their womenfolk—so say the all-wise men. Only the daughters of the well-to-do, by their standards, go on through high school and college. But let the son of a poor peasant show a spark of interest and father will mortgage his precious pig to push him into the stratosphere of the world-famous Leyden, Groningen, or Utrecht Universities.

So remember, on Goeree-en-Overflakkee the woman's place is in the home, where she is to be seen and not heard. She feeds the chickens and tends the garden. She scrubs the pigs and the cobblestone street in front of the home at least once a week and keeps both immaculate. Many work in the fields. Their housekeeping jobs are never completed. Always they have knitting and mending ahead. Their men are good to them, in

their stolid, masculine way, but "woe" to the woman who might be so much as fifteen minutes late with a meal for her menfolk. After the evening dishes are done the women do not read—they do their needlework and mending. Their men do all the reading. The first electric power and light installation came to the island in 1950. In July of that year I had a letter from Maria's sister Hannie, written in great excitement, under the first electric light in the de Vos home.

The islanders still live under strict, religious, puritanical blue laws. Dancing is frowned upon, make-up a badge of disgrace. On Sundays they dress up in their best clothes just to sit, or stroll, after church services. On Saturday nights they tightly lock up their cycles, skates, swim-suits, and needlework. They must not possess, much less wear, slacks, shorts, sun-suits or harmless sleeveless dresses if they are the restricted sex.

Maria was a mere girl of thirteen when, in 1940, Germany invaded the Netherlands, crushed Dutch resistance, and destroyed Rotterdam. She was a young woman of seventeen when, after four years of German occupation, the entire population of the island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee was evacuated to the German border in the Province of Limburg.

TWO

Important Letters

Sunday, October 19, 1947, was a perfectly beautiful fall day in Ohio. My wife Dorothy and I were returning to our home in Connecticut from a Pacific Coast trip and stopped off in Columbus, Ohio, to spend the day with my sisters Edith, Eva, and Hazel. We had dinner at the Faculty Club on the Ohio State University campus. In the afternoon we drove twenty miles north along the Olentangy River to our old home town of Delaware and just as plainly now as then I can see the riot of color in the foliage of the beautiful Ohio Wesleyan University campus there. I remember drinking from the famous and somewhat odoriferous Ohio Wesleyan Sulphur Spring. We returned to my sisters' home in Columbus with but a few minutes to spare before we would have to leave for the station to catch the eastbound "Spirit of St. Louis."

Old friends of the family, Joe and Bertha Leeder, stopped by to say "hello." Our contacts with the Leeders were growing more and more infrequent and this was the first time we had seen them in several years. As they were leaving, Edith said something to Mrs. Leeder about "your Holland family." I casually said to Joe, "What Holland family?" And this is what he told us briefly and quickly:

"Through the *Digest* we learned of a fine Dutch girl, Rie de Vos, the oldest of ten children. Her father is a small onion-seed farmer on an island in the North Sea, off the coast of Holland. When the Nazis cut the dykes and flooded the island, the fam-

ily was evacuated to the German border. After the liberation, the family returned to the island to find not a spark of life—every living thing had been killed by the brackish sea water. Their brick home and seed-drying barns, which had been partly submerged, were a shambles, and their household possessions had been stolen or buried under a sludge of silt. The mother died shortly after liberation and Rie, the oldest child, has taken the mother's role in the struggle for survival. Like thousands of other Europeans, they have almost nothing to wear and are fighting malnutrition among the younger children. We are sending food and clothes boxes to this unusual and remarkable girl and her family." I hardly had time to scribble the Holland address on the back of an envelope before the Leeders drove away in their car.

Subsequently, Dorothy and I learned that in February 1947 the *Reader's Digest* published the following letter:

> An American soldier gave me a copy of the *Reader's Digest*. Never have I read a book that so keeps your thoughts on other peoples and lets you forget your own troubles. Reading it, I think, "How nice must it be to get every month that book!"
>
> —Rie de Vos, Rhyswet 10

This is the letter which Maria had given to the corporal for mailing exactly two years before, and through which the Leeders learned about Rie and the de Vos family. Rhyswet was the post office address in the tiny village of Nunhem, which lies on the west bank of the Maas (Meuse) River. Across the river is Germany. It is about as far from Goeree-en-Overflakkee and the North Sea as you can get in Holland—about one hundred miles east of Rotterdam. This section was heavily bombed and mined, crisscrossed by shellfire, and a place of abomination during the evacuation period.

And so it was Bertha Leeder who discovered Maria for us when she selected the name of Maria de Vos of Holland for her gift subscription to the *Reader's Digest*. The letter of thanks that Maria wrote revealed an unusually gifted girl, whose quick

intelligence cut across her halting use of the English language in such a way that the motherless de Vos family immediately became real to the Leeders. Here is Rie's first letter—from which we also learned to know her by the diminutive "Rie"—to her friends:

Julianstraat 20
Ooltgensplaat
May 2, 1947

DEAR UNKNOWN:

To my great surprise I found a postcard in the hall which announced me a gift subscription of the *Reader's Digest.* I do not know if you are one of the editors or yust a reader, but anyway I want to thank you for this great gift.

Two years ago, after liberation, I learned to know the *Digest* by some of your men who fought for our country as for others. They were interested in the *Digest,* and in the difficult days with shortage and scarceness of food, for me the *Digest* was a miracle. A story of life over the world for us who in five years only had seen dead and war and Germans. I got some numbers then and some articles I know almost by head.

When we returned to our island which was flooded, my Mother died and left me the housekeeping. I am nineteen years and the eldest of ten children. And whenever I had to fight difficulties in this last two years (and often I had with all the pre-war life and the poorness we are in now) I yust read the *Digest* over and over, read about people who had harder jobs than I have, about great men and women, about your country and the things you all do, and I saw how little my work is, and how content I ought to be.

Then the *Digest* helps me to learn better English because when Mother died I had to finish lessons and now the *Digest* helps me to correct my English.

To me it is also a great idea that so many people read and know the *Digest* and I am so glad that you

are so kind to me as I am yust a simple Dutch girl and you do not know me at all. It shows something about the world friendship which is growing.

My greatest dream always was to see America, as things stand now I do not see the real coming-true. But even if I am seventy years before I manage to get there, I know the first thing to do is to go to Pleasantville and try to see some of the *R.D.* I hope you'll understand how I appreciate this gift, I shall never forget your kindness.

With my best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
RIE DE VOS

The friendship thus begun deepened into affection on both sides.

The joys and sorrows of Rie's family became joys and sorrows for the Leeders' too. This you can understand as her letters unfold the pattern of her life. Rie's second letter follows:

Ooltgensplaat
July 16, 1947

DEAR FRIENDS:

How nice of you to write me back on the letter! I was so glad with your letter, as I have to stay home all the time to care for the children and do the work. It is always such a surprise to get a letter, and this time it was more than just a word from friends, because it showed me again your kindness and the big hearts American people have. In this time of war and trouble it is so good to see that many people want peace, and are kind and show love to strangers. Tonight came the *Reader's Digest* at the same time as your letter. It opened another world for me, and sometimes I can imagine to be in your nice country when reading, and it has all kinds of articles. Once I got "The Seawolf" by Jack London, from an American officer; I enjoyed it much and this year there was an article in the *Digest*

about Jack London. Now I understand much more of his book and strange way of writing. Every month in fact I find new things and learn more, and after me, other people who know some English enjoy the *R.D.*

Now I'll tell you some of my family. First there is Dad, who is forty-six, and getting old and thin since Mother died. I never have seen a more happy marriage than theirs. Then I, twenty. Then my brother Wim, nineteen years old, working on Dad's grounds and helping with the seed cleaning and drying. Bram, seventeen, and Kryn, fifteen, are also boys, they are in the third and fourth form of Highschool and are very good in learning. Marius is fourteen and this year he left school and now helps Dad also. Rens is thirteen and still goes to school. He is often ill, not very strong, but a very good boy. Hanny is twelve, she is dark, she helps me with the washing of the plates and the dishes after the meals. Aly is a blonde, eleven years old, very nice to me but really the same problem as the boys for the sake of clothes. Always torns and holes in the stockings, she is yust a boy. Johan is nine and the most difficult of the boys, he dares everything and always get through. Tineke is seven years old, a pretty girl but a little spoiled because she is the youngest.

They are all good kids and help me a lot. Of course it is difficult sometimes when the weather is nice and my friends go out to stay home and darn stockings. Every fortnight plus twenty pairs of very old very airy stockings is the thing I hate terrible. Sometimes when I did the big washing I dreamed of the worned out things and saw only the holes. But it does not matter—as long as we have each other we are really lucky.

What a lovely big house you have! It must be nice to live there, with trees. We live in a village but on the whole Island is not one tree left after the salt water destroyed so much. I live not far from Walcheren, where your daughter landed. It is very flat here, but we live near the North Sea and I go swimming every day. Only

my swimming suit is nearly finished and the boys swim in their underwear which they do not like and I also not for it gets soon worned out.

It is very nice of you to ask me if we need anything, when ever you have things you do not use anymore or old fashioned clothes I'll be glad to get them. When Mother died I have learned to sew and of course with only a few points and nothing in the shops I learned to remake and make clothes from old ones. But please do not buy anything as I see you have grandchildren and children yourself. I do not know the size stockings for we have other sizes, I do not have big feet but I am tall. I am rather slim at the moment for I am busy now. To be honest I did not put on stockings for months not even to church. I do not have them and when I get something in the shops I always take clothes for the boys. Once a month you get something, a piece of underwear or some thread. But it is not much. Anyway we now get bread enough and we are so thankful war is over.

I'll look for some pictures of us, and hope to receive some of you. Please do not buy anything for us, I am so ashamed of some Dutch people who dare to ask after America has halped us to much. I hope one of you'll visit us sometime. A friend of me goes to Michigan on Aug. 2. I am giving him English lessons. I really would like to go with him. But I love Holland. It is rather late, I have to stop now. Tomorrow I must clean the house very good for Saturday I have to go for an examination. I am still learning for I like it. I hope you'll write again. Give my regards to the family.

Yours sincerely,
Rie de Vos

In the summer of 1947 Rie wrote that fire had destroyed their barns and that their entire year's crop, the first good one since the war, was a total loss. Here is her third letter to the Leeders:

Julianstraat 20
Ooltgensplaat
Sept. 20, 1947

DEAR FRIENDS:

This morning I received Janet's letter. There are no words to tell you how much good it did. But I will try to explain. Some weeks ago I was so very tired I could not on any longer. The summer has been terrible hot and it seemed if the children made themselves more dirty and destroyed and worned out more clothing than ever before. At night I would lay awake long times and I could not eat. Now the Doctor told me I had overworked myself and my heart is getting weak. Often I have heartbeatings so fast I yust have to sit down. And I am dizzy and have headache often. Now he said I must eat every hour something and rest in the afternoons and be very calm. I got medicines and he said, "When I did not know you so well you must be at home I would send you on a long holiday." But he is our housedoc; was with us when Mother and dear baby brother died and knows everything. I did not tell Dad for he is so good and would want me to stay in bed.

But that's impossible for who would look to everything. I tried to rest and sometimes I feel better, but you see, how can I sit down when the house is dirty or the children need me. Last week my best girlfriend went on a holiday and I was depressed today. She visits me every day which is so couraging. I have many friends but of course they can go out often when I cannot. I am ashamed of being that way, and am trying to be cheerful and interested in all things, but it is so difficult when I feel so tired.

Now this morning your nice letter came and it remembered me the goodwill which still is in the world, and all my friends and I got to think about. My six brothers, how helpful they are and how lovely my little sisters are growing. It is not good to see only trouble,

one has to be grateful also and we are a good family and I am proud to say our house and home always is heaven for all of us.

I feel so excited about the package, it is so very kind of you to take all this trouble. The kids are so fascinated by "a real American box" and we are all looking out. I red lots about nylon hose, but never had them myself. I wear no stockings in summer for it is cheap and easy. But I have longed for nice ones to go to church at Sunday and visit friends. For in the good old days we had to dress ourselves to go out and Mother always learned me to be as one ought to be, with colors who match and brushed shoes and clothes, etc. Nowadays we try it also but I have one pair of shoes, for every occasion, and do not think any more about the color of my coat fitting my shoes. I would not have dreamed of the way we are dressed now before the war. But it is not as important as one thinks it is when you have money and shops are full.

We go very hard hit last week. Father is a seed-grower and selects seed also. Specially onion and cabbage seeds. Now he had big sheds where he dries and cleans it before the war it was good business and we had about ten labourers. Now when the Germans put the sea in the island and we had to evacuate and the salt water destroyed the fields, trees, and also our sheds which were standing low. Dad built it up when we returned, and after two years of hard labour we had no debt on the sheds anymore. Now last Thursday on a very hot night all burned down; it is very dry here and no water anywhere. The sheds were assuranced but not the selected seed. It was all onionseed which costs much money for labour and Dad had the best of all. We would have had a good year and the shopowner in the Highvillage, who sometimes gets coats had even promised me he would keep one for me. I planned so much how at least we would have a little money again and I had saved my textile-points for a

coat and suits for the boys. My coat I got in 1941 and I was fourteen years old then. I was slimmer then than I am now at twenty years old and I am also longer now which makes it a funny view. Nobody here laughs at it for everybody has trouble with clothes, but I'll have to make a coat from Mother's coat and it may seem silly but I cannot do it. I left everything as it was.

But of course we are getting through and we manage and it is not bad to have not all you wish. The kids are more glad now with a simple blouse or frock I made from old materials, as I was when I was a kid with the nicest presents. I am really jealous of only Janet's education, you have learned such a lot! I am learning French and German and bookkeeping but my teachers say I do not work yust as good as I used to. But that's because the headaches. It will go better sometime I am sure; when it is not so hot anymore I'll feel better.

I write by air mail to let you sooner know I got your nice long letter. I always wrote much. I have friends who long for letters Holland and my best boyfriend went to America August 2. He likes the country and is working hard. You see, his Father died long ago and he helps his Mother and brothers and sisters. He gave her all his earnings and only saved to go to America where his Father's friend lives in Michigan, Grand Rapids. Thanks for the photo, you are very pretty. We have macaroni sometimes in the shops, not spaghetti or noodles.

Please do not mind my bad writing. I had lots to do on the sewing machine, now my hands tremble a little. I have to write on both sides of my paper because otherwise the letter'll be too heavy.

Dad asks me to give you his greetings. I hope to hear from you again. God bless you for your kindness.

Your friend,
Rie de Vos

The Leeders decided that now was the time to send a box of clothing. Rie had spoken of making over her mother's coat for the winter but the thought of it saddened her. She felt she couldn't wear it. Janet, the Leeders' daughter, decided to remedy the situation by sending Rie one of her two winter coats. The decision as to which coat to send was not an easy one to reach but, in the end, it was her only fur coat that was mailed to Holland. It was, perhaps, this sacrifice and understanding which made the two girls feel more like sisters than mere friends.

Joe and Bertha Leeder and their three children moved to Columbus from Wisconsin many years ago. Joe had accepted a professorship in the School of Music of Ohio State University. From the beginning of their residence in Ohio they became fast friends with my sister Edith Keller, and for over twenty-five years there has been a close kinship between our families. My sister, Edith, in her capacity as State Supervisor of Music in the Department of Education, has been associated with the development of music programs in the schools and colleges since 1924. In her quiet, modest way, Edith has been responsible for making music education available to millions of Ohio children. Joe Leeder, in his field of music education at the University, has stimulated his students to enthusiastic teaching programs and has broadened the concept of the teacher's function in the community. Through his books, as well as his teaching, his influence has been widespread.

THREE

Getting Acquainted

The week end following our return to Stamford from Columbus, I introduced my family to Rie. In my letter I told her I was a white-haired grandfather and enclosed pictures of all of us—my wife, Dorothy; our daughter, Ann, and her three-year-old daughter, Barbara; and our daughter, Mary, in her blue cadet nurse uniform. In a few brief words I drew a thumbnail sketch of each one.

Then I told her we would like to get acquainted through correspondence and asked her to tell us about her family. With winter just ahead, I told her I would put the family in warm, sturdy waterproof footwear if she would send me drawings of the feet, each identified by name and the Dutch shoe size, so that I could adjust to American sizes.

Thus started the most exhilarating, interesting, as well as voluminous, exchange of correspondence of my life, and I am a veteran letter-writer. Almost weekly our letters were criss-crossing the Atlantic on KLM's Flying Dutchman Constellations. Her letters were short, sharp, and to the point. They were filled with quaint Dutch colloquialisms, and Dorothy became an expert in deciphering her sometimes twisted word structures. Occasionally I would stop at the office of the Consulate General of the Netherlands in Rockefeller Center and ask one of the secretaries to untangle a sentence or paragraph in which she had mixed a little Dutch. It was obvious she wrote with amazing speed. So I matched her promptness and speed and wrote

to her from home, office, trains, planes, and hotels. I kept probing her background, experiences, hopes and fears, as well as her current activities. Her response absolutely amazed me and this is why the experience was so dramatic and satisfying. She opened a new world to me just as surely as I did to her.

Almost immediately I was concerned about the air mail cost from Holland where they deal in grams instead of ounces. So I sent her a five-dollar bill, thinking she could exchange it for Dutch guilders and buy airmail stamps. Back came the bill with an apologetic letter—"Please, Mr. Keller, I cannot accept money, you do too much already for my family. I will use guilders from my English teaching for stamps. Then it is against money rules and if found by officers the money and letter would be confiscated and I might not get your nice letter. Nobody ever saw American money on the island."

We asked Rie what she most needed for the winter immediately ahead. Strange, she did not need a single thing, but she did write, "I am terrible worried about the younger children, Tineke mostly, and Johan, too, did not have the right food during the war years and it is not right now, and they show it in their growing up. Could you send a box of rice and raisins for the little ones for the holidays? But do not send much for it is too expensive."

Right here is where a partnership responsibility fell into a natural pattern. Dorothy took over the food and "little things" department. I did most of the letter writing and gathered together the clothes, and handled the packing and shipping department. Box followed box after box after box, all qualifying as "U.S.A. Gift Packages."

Dorothy maintained a food-shipping schedule through the winter months. Raisins, rice, chocolate—sweet and bitter—peanuts, peanut butter, yeast, honey, nuts, dates, figs, candy, soap, etc. That was her department and she loved it. The first Christmas we knew them, 1947, was one of rugged simplicity and almost bitter frugality. That was Europe's most terrible winter of hunger and frustration after the war. Time was too short for us to do much, but we made it up the two following Christmases.

When it came to clothes, anything we could dig up was suitable, from a size standpoint. Fortunately, Rie could step right into Dorothy's clothes with little if any alteration. We just could not miss on an age range from ten to fifty involving the eleven—boys, girls, men and women. Many of the things sent over went to friends and relatives who had no friends in America and were in just as great need.

The second Christmas, 1948, was different. Dorothy wrote to Rie in September. Overseas parcels in the winter moved very slowly, sometimes taking two months. Still there was nothing at all Rie needed for herself, so she told us; however, she did write—"But if you have an old purse you do not use you could send it for my Christmas, but please do not buy for me one or send me one you could use because I do not need it that badly. You see, I never had a purse and when I go to church on Sunday I have to carry my coin wrapped in a handkerchief."

That Christmas box I will never forget. It was not what I put in it that counted. It was Dorothy's expression of love for the motherless de Vos children. Candy, candles, handkerchiefs, useful things—everyday things for us, but luxuries for them. There were four inexpensive plastic purses or bags Dorothy selected for Rie, twenty-one, Hannie, thirteen, Aly, twelve, and Tineke, eight.

This year, too, we were in plenty of time for Christmas. The letter that came around New Year's was so full of wonderment, joy and happiness that it made our eyes fill up. There was a little note from Tineke written in her childish Dutch hand. Rie had written a translation—"I was so joyful with my satchel I jumped up and down and punched holes in the air."

The next Christmas, in 1949, Rie wrote, "Things are better this Christmas time. We had a pig again which we butchered and father hanged the hams from the ceiling to show our thankfulness for plenty."

Abraham, Maria's father, was one of ten children in a peasant's family. His father labored in the fields on Goeree-en-Overflakkee from daylight to dusk every day of the week, except Sunday. Oftentimes his mother worked in the fields, too, so that enough of the coarse food would be on the family table.

For 20¢ a day an old Dutchwoman would look after the children while the mother, bent over double, was working in the fields. Vincent van Gogh painted these scenes over and over, which will be found hanging in art museums all over the world.

Abraham had an impatient yearning for education but this was denied him. His parents were too poor and, at twelve, he was forced to leave school to work in the fields. He was unhappy and eventually left the Island for Dordrecht on the mainland, where his older sister lived. Here he worked as an unskilled laborer in a factory and here he learned, too, that a peasant's life in the fields on Goeree-en-Overflakkee had its good points. So he returned to Ooltgensplaat to be a farmer. At this point, when he was twenty-two years of age, he met Martyntje Buth in the Dutch Reformed Church and fell in love with her.

But this was impossible! A lowly peasant laborer without land or money should not so much as touch the tip of Martyntje's finger. Martyntje was a Buth—one of a family of six girls and two boys. Martyntje's grandfather was a prosperous farmer, which is the top of the social ladder on the Island. Martyntje's father was the most important butcher on the Island, which is a position of distinction.

The Buth name is important in Holland and must stem back into medieval history. I base this on the Buth coat of arms sent to me by Maria Buth, maternal grandmother of Maria de Vos. The elaborate steel helmet and shield connote the military, so important in Dutch history. In front of the shield and atop the helmet are two fish. Holland's early economy and commercial expansion were founded on the fishing industry—actually the common herring. 'Tis said, perhaps facetiously, that Rotterdam was built on a foundation of herring bones, and this is literally true. While the Goeree-en-Overflakkee branch of the family is generations removed from the Buths of Dutch fame and fortune, the very name and strain add almost a tinge of royal blood in their thinking.

Martyntje's family and friends threatened and forbade. God forbid this should happen! Realizing they were making no headway, they sent Martyntje to the Hague, not realizing that separation, particularly by distance only, makes the heart grow

fonder. As was to be expected, they neatly drove Martyntje straight into Abraham's arms and to the altar.

Abraham and Martyntje were poor in worldly goods but rich in love. At first Abraham worked in the fields for others, but all the time he was a student of onion seed cultivation, an art in horticulture. His "green thumb" became known in the export seed markets. He leased a few acres, later bought a few, built a simple, sturdy brick home in the village and was making slow progress to independence when the Nazi horde overran and occupied the island and later cut the dykes to let the salty North Sea drown his few acres, his simple brick home and drying barns.

Now Abraham is slowly beating his way back. When he first returned to his home on the island he had the help of the Dutch government and Marshall Plan dollars in his long, tedious program to revitalize his few sea-salted acres. Likewise, it was the help of his strong, sturdy sons that accelerated his rebuilding program.

FOUR

Maria Herself

When I first started writing to Rie I knew nothing about her background except the few brief words passed on by Joe Leeder during our visit in Columbus. I found from her letters that she was playing the part of mother and housekeeper, studying and tutoring English, learning French and German, and riding a cycle many miles to earn a bookkeeping diploma.

Dorothy and I simply could not fit together all the pieces of her many activities. Consequently I began to ask questions in my letters to help us to better understand. I asked her when and how she learned English and about her studying and tutoring English and about her bookkeeping course, on top of running a household for her father and ten growing children. I knew she had no outside help with the work because she had written, "We do not have money for help or to hire the washing out." Slowly but surely the pattern of this part of her life unfolded.

In the customary Dutch tradition, Rie started to school at the age of six and finished the equivalent of our grade school at thirteen, on the eve of the German occupation. English is not taught in these grades on the island and she knew not a word of it, but she had the desire and planned to do something about it. However, her school years, as such, were over since, being the oldest girl of the family, her place was in the home. She wrote, "My mother was weak and ailing most of the time from childbearing and no money. Two of my brothers are

bright at book learning and get such good grades they will get Government help but only partly and they will have to live on the University place which will cost much money which we do not have—but we'll manage."

But she had to delay her plans to start a regular English course for the three years of the occupation, and due to the desperate straits of her family and her need in the household. Finally, in the winter of 1943–44, at sixteen, she joined a class of fifteen girls and boys, to take weekly English lessons from the headmaster of the neutral school. The course was to run between two and three years but, unfortunately, it was interrupted before it was well started. In February, 1944, the Germans posted a proclamation that the island would be evacuated within twenty-four hours and the dykes would be cut. This was at the point in the war when it was expected that the important seaports of the Low Countries would be invaded by the Allies.

Long before this time, the Germans had removed all English books from libraries and schools and their ownership by individuals was forbidden. However, Rie tucked her one English textbook and her small Dutch-English dictionary in the pack (limited to thirty pounds) that the Goeree-en-Overflakkee islanders were allowed to carry on their backs to exile. This was all the English language material she had for the eighteen months of exile far away on the German border. During this time she virtually memorized both textbook and dictionary. She thought she could write simple English sentences, but she was not sure they were right. Of course she could not speak much English, but she did have a firm starting foundation.

This was the status of her knowledge of English until November, 1944, when the English soldiers were driving the Nazis before them through the border Province of Limburg across the Rhine into Germany. Here the British Army stopped—at the Meuse River where the de Vos family was exiled. There were hundreds of "British Tommy Atkinses" around all that winter and in no time at all Rie was not only talking and writing simple English, but interpreting their orders to the Dutch evacuees.

At eighteen, when Rie returned to Goeree-en-Overflakkee,

the English class reassembled. After the first class the headmaster told her she no longer needed his simple English lessons, and opened a new world to her—his English library consisting of several hundred books. The headmaster further told her he would send her Goeree-en-Overflakkee natives who were planning to emigrate to Canada and the United States, and she could give them basic English lessons and earn a little money.

Singularly enough, the first pupil the headmaster sent was a young man named Hans, a native of the Island, who had enlisted in the Canadian Army. She wrote about her first meeting with Hans:

> In May 1947 there was a village dance to celebrate our liberation. Met Hans there and he asked to bring me home. I refused because it was too painful for another friend who was there and I always refused him.
>
> Two days later Hans went to my headmaster English teacher for lessons as he planned to go to the U.S.A. in August. The headmaster, who was very busy, sent him to me because he thought I could teach the simple conversation, etc. I was very embarrassed for I had refused him at the liberation celebration. I thought I could not do it. Hans convinced me I could. I asked him one guilder each week an hour.

Hans had learned a mechanic's trade in the army and he was going far, far away to fabulous America. A relative in Grand Rapids was his sponsor, and of course Hans needed the rudiments of basic English before sailing.

Now, Hans was just an average Dutch boy, but to Rie he must have worn a halo of the American wonderland. The young Netherlander did display one brilliant streak of good judgment by falling head over heels in love with Rie. The Dutch courtship went apace and, while Rie taught Hans his English words, so did they plight their troth.

I first learned about Rie and Hans during the winter of 1947–48. Early in our correspondence I just casually and a bit facetiously asked her about the romantic side of her life, and

told her about my daughter's lives. She responded promptly and told me about Hans, who was then only a short time in America. Later she wrote:

> Of course Hans will have to learn his English more and have steady work and some money for what you call an apartment—he could not afford a house yet. We will be married at the Leeders' in Columbus who will be my guarantee to go to America. But then I cannot go yet until Hannie, twelve years old, grows up more and can look after the family. But it seems such a long time to wait and I wonder if we can wait so long.

When the de Vos family returned to the Island after liberation, Rie took complete charge of the household management. Her mother and the baby Tommy were seriously ill and soon died. Financially, the situation was desperate. Obviously they had to do without many of the everyday necessities. Everything to wear and everything to eat, except vegetables, was rationed. Most fabrics and shoes were ersatz and quality standards were below anything ever known by Americans. This was the bare sustenance level of millions of European families, of which the de Vos family was but one. Now one can understand what the boxes of food and clothing from America meant to the people over there.

Rie tried to save the guilders she earned by teaching English, but ofttimes when the budget-going was desperate she had to dump her earnings into the common pot. Most of her lessons were given in her home, one at a time, but she was quick to figure out a simple mass-production technique. She let the word filter out into the village that she would teach three or more, simultaneously, for two guilders an hour. Word reached her from a Dutch family of four, getting ready to emigrate to Canada, and she taught them in their home for two guilders an hour.

From the foregoing you would think Rie's time would be filled to overflowing. Indeed it was—plus. Cooking, cleaning, washing, mending, mothering—under difficult conditions by

American standards—kept her busy from the crack of dawn until late at night. She tried to keep for her studies the hours of ten to midnight or later. Then she would read or study in bed by the light of a kerosene lamp standing on a pile of books beside her bed.

Her bedroom was on the second floor under the slanting roof, and shared with Hannie, Aly, and Tineke. Always for Rie it was three in a bed. The bedroom was so small there was room for only one double bed for Rie, Hannie, and Aly, a small bed for Tineke, one chair between the beds, and a washstand. There were no closets and Rie wrote, "The washstand is an illusion. No space to stand in front of it so it is used as a catch-all. I have a bookcase on the wall made by my brother from two orange crates."

Even though her days were filled with household duties and her nights too short for sleep, her mind and will were hitched to a star—improvement. But how to do it? She joined a simple, elementary Dutch business class being conducted by the headmaster. There were fourteen boys and Rie in the class. The course ran six months and Rie graduated with honors and a diploma.

Still not content, still seeking, she talked to Ooltgensplaat's leading seed merchant. From him she borrowed books concerning Dutch correspondence. Burning the midnight oil, as American students call it, she studied the books and wrote imaginary Dutch business letters:

> Dear Sir:
> Yours of the 16th instant at hand. I beg to tell you the seeds were not up to germination specifications. Therefore, etc.

This went on for about six months. Rie was both teacher and pupil and had to grade and rate her own work. There was no one else to do it.

Still driven by a burning desire for self-improvement, she joined a two-year advanced business course in the village of Middelharnis, approximately eleven miles distant from Oolt-

gensplaat. There were five young men, high school graduates, and Rie. The class met Friday evening for three hours. Middelharnis can be reached from Ooltgensplaat by stream tram, but Rie could not afford the tram fare, so she cycled the trip atop the Sleeper Dyke road. She was the only one from her village attending the class. She wrote:

> In October 1946 I started to go to a bookkeepings course. A very hard course for which high school is needed, which I did not have. But I managed. I cycled to Middelharnis, most hard in winter, no lights on the Dykes. Cold rain and fog bothered me, but I managed.

Goeree-en-Overflakkee is an infinitesimal speck in the North Sea, actually below sea level. Look at your global map and you will see that the wind has a clean, unobstructed sweep from the North Pole, above Greenland and slightly below Spitzbergen to Goeree-en-Overflakkee. Holland is the antithesis of the sunny and moderate climes. The same fog shrouds the Island as the British Isles. It rains on an average of three days out of seven. Steady, strong winds blow for days and nights on end, without interruption. Steady gales and storms beat mountainous seas against and throw spray over the Watcher Dyke. Why so many windmills pumping such prodigious quantities of water from the polders? Answer—the steady winds from the North Atlantic.

On sunny, pleasant days, which are in the minority, roads atop the curving dykes are filled with cyclists. When the weather is foul, which is in the majority, cycle traffic is meager in the daylight hours and nonexistent at night. There are no lights on the dyke roads. Looking out to sea, only utter darkness. Looking into the Island, only a few dimly lit lanterns, no more than firefly lights, in the faraway villages lying behind the dykes below sea level.

To cycle into the normally strong headwinds atop a dyke, you have to tack like a Dutch mariner maneuvering his schooner into a northeaster. To ride into the teeth of gale winds, driving rain, fog and sleet, on a night as dark as a squaw's pocket,

is the very essence of trick bicycle riding. Rie's cycle technique would fill your soul with envy. It was no mean feat for her to maintain a schedule under these conditions. Not unlike the motto carved in marble above the pillars of New York City's main post office on Eight Avenue across the street from Penn Station—

> Not snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.
>
> HERODOTUS

Once a week, between 5:30 P.M. and midnight, Rie cycled the eleven miles to the Highvillage of Middelharnis, returning the eleven miles to the village of Ooltgensplaat after class. Only extremely icy roads infrequently forced her to ride the steam tram. Rain or shine, sometimes dripping and soaked to the skin, she cycled to her class. Among the first boxes sent to Holland, we included several raincoats, this before we knew her old raincoat had burst at the seams because of her growing. She wrote, "How nice it will be to ride dry from my knees to my neck. It is not a nice feeling to ride for an hour or two terrible wet. I feel better dry with the boys in the class and now I will not dread the late night ride home." Many times on foul nights she returned home after midnight.

The only lights on the roads were the headlights of a few trucks carrying seeds and vegetables to the quays for loading in the little harbors of the villages. She feared the trucks in bad weather because they could not see her, and her position on the dyke might be precarious, and she might be sideswiped on a curve. Of course she was never molested—such things are unknown on Goeree-en-Overflakkee.

The boys in the class were better prepared for the advanced course, being high school graduates, and they had time for study during the day. Not so Rie, who had never-ending housework to fill her days and evenings. She wrote, "It is hard to keep up but a diploma will mean real bookkeeping in a Dutch

business and I will manage." All of which proves the old adage, "Where there is a will there is a way." And she finished second in the class—only one boy topped her grades.

Amazing as it appears, she crowded other studies into her tight schedule. A series of French lessons, one man and Rie; a series of German lessons, two men and Rie. But lack of Dutch guilders forced her to drop these special lessons. Undaunted, she now borrowed an old set of more or less obsolete English business books from the seed merchant in her village. Without any help she studied late at night—but let me tell you exactly as she wrote me:

> For half a year I studied English business correspondence from a second hand course. I wanted to get a diploma from an English business examination held in Rotterdam. I felt uncertain because I did not know very well what would be required of me. I knew it was an evening examination and I could not return to the Island by tram and ferry the same night. I asked a friend I know, a mechanic, if he knew a cheap but decent hotel in Rotterdam, where he worked one year. He told me he would bring me home on his motorcycle. But I had to say no because people would talk. You see, I am engaged to Hans.
>
> I told only my father about my plans. I did not even tell my sister Hannie or my best girl friend. I left in the morning early without anyone noticing it. I had extra time because of the evening examination, so I went to the Museum Boymans where there was an exhibition of a Dutch painter who lived in Paris, Kees von Dongen. It was beautiful and made me feel rested and good inside and I forgot about the time. I did not think to eat. I had to hurry like mad to be in time for the examination.
>
> In the streetcar was a boy looking like one from my village. I watched him for ten minutes and then he faced me. He was the one! Also going to the examination in the same place without telling anybody. So we made

a deal to be silent. The examination was hard, I did not think I would pass.

When I hurried out of the place (without hotel reservation) my friend was waiting with his motorcycle. I was so grateful and tired that I just went home with him without any discussion. People on the ferry boat saw us. Later they talked about me and I could not tell them I had not been out with him, just because I did not know if I had passed the examination. If I had not passed the examination it would have ruined my reputation as English teacher, even if it really had nothing to do with these lessons. The talk and gossip stayed in the little village for six weeks until I learned I had passed the examination. However, I passed with good marks and then I could tell them.

The romance of Rie and Hans began in May 1947. When Hans sailed from Holland in August of the same year they were engaged to be married. The following year Rie applied for an immigration visa to enter the United States and become an American citizen. The waiting list, due to quota limitations, was a long one. It was not until the summer of 1949 that she was notified her visa would be cleared, probably in December. It was during the summer of 1949 that Mr. Leeder had to furnish the United States Consul in Rotterdam with a financial statement to support and guarantee his sponsorship.

FIVE

The War Years

Having probed deeply into Rie's education and lifted the lid to peer into her life, I asked her about her period of exile. I did not find her bitter, but rather philosophical. She had buried most of the harrowing experience in her subconscious mind, although to this day some memories will make her tense and flush with anger. Here is what she wrote about the evacuation:

> The Germans came to Holland in May 1940 and a few weeks later came on Goeree-en-Overflakkee. You see our Island is a fortress in front of Rotterdam. The German soldiers lived in the big old fortress we have near the water. First in August 1940 and several times later we got notice to keep our evacuation bags packed and be prepared. Sometimes we heard rumors, so we would sleep in our clothes.
>
> In February, 1944 it came for sure. All people on the Island got twenty-four hours notice to leave. Many people did not believe it and did not do a thing. We got our notice from German soldiers on Sunday and spent the day packing the thirty pounds of food and clothing each could carry in a pack on their backs. It was a panic in the village.
>
> Father tried to telephone Mr. Jan, the head of a big seed business at Nunhem on the Rhine River by Germany. Just before we had to leave on Monday

morning father had a telegram about a place to stay which he could show to the German officers. We all left on the only ferry running from the Island and tram to Rotterdam. Most people had no place to go. In Rotterdam they brought us to a school and gave us some food. Then they told most of the people where they would be taken. Mostly to the Dutch Provinces of Gronigen and Friesland about 130 miles from the Island. Many people had never before left the Island. They took the old people to homes in The Hague where many died of sickness, malnutrition, and unhappiness. The food was very coarse and very poor.

We gave our Limburg address to friends. Nobody visited anybody else except for short distances either walking or on cycles without tires. The Germans stoled Dutch peoples tires. Mr. Jan's place was in Nunhem, a tiny village near the town of Roermond. There were no friends or relatives for 80 miles. Father worked for Mr. Jan in the fields for pay of forty guilders a week. My oldest brother Wim worked, too, sometimes and had fifteen guilders a week—out of work often.

Mr. Jan's place was a tiny white rentmaster's house in front of the Castle, on the lane, joining the big road from Germany. The little white house was too small for so big a family but we managed. It was built over a stable and had no water or electricity, not even a pump inside. Downstairs were two rooms, the kitchen floor was old brick, and the living room was where father and mother slept. Upstairs were two bedrooms, one for five boys Wim, Bram, Kryn, Marius and Rens—one for the five others, Hannie, Aly, Tineke, little Johan, and me. We had to sleep five in a bed but sometimes on the floor. Bedrooms were very small, under a steep, peaked roof.

We were rationed and barely had enough bread and margarine. We had milk from the nearest farmer with whom we became friends and sometimes father could buy wheat and rye and the baker baked it. Some-

times mother baked it. There was no soap except an imitation with which you really could not wash yourself clean, like green clay. Also a soap powder that made clothes very dirty and gray looking. We had points for clothes and shoes, not enough even if we had the money which we didn't. We had to buy the very badly made ersatz paper shoes and could not afford to buy the also inferior clothes. So we could not use many of our textile points, for no money, and had many left.

In the first months the German soldiers were not bad. We had a ten o'clock curfew. We knew about the underground work and who they were but my family did not have much to do with them at first. Of course there were many laws, like no radios, no English books, etc. When an ordinary German soldier tried to molest you it was just a matter of reporting it to the officers . . . but they still had discipline in their army.

Only they took away our liberty mostly and for that we hated them. Also they stoled our cycles and our food and quartered their soldiers in our already crowded houses. But we hated them most for murders among Dutch underground workers and their terrible cruelty.

Until June, 1944 we lived peaceful—as far as possible. Mother expected a baby and could not do much. Rens and Marius went by bus to a protestant school in Roermond. Hannie, Aly, and Johan went to the one and only Catholic school in the tiny village of Nunhem and spoke the dialect like Germans so near the border, like other Nunhem children and played with them. We had a garden and some fruit trees. Also I helped in the big orchard of the neighbors to pick berries and cherries. We had lots of fruit that summer and Mother liked to can it only we did not have enough glass jars or rubber rings.

The little white house was very hard to work in.

Old and not looked after. I worked hard to keep it neat, as Mother was sick most of the time. . . .

In the evenings father did not obey the curfew and radio laws. He knew all the Dutch people on the farms and where the radios were hid and when this one would be on and that one not on. He would listen with the Dutchmen to the English news about the war. He could not understand English but he liked to listen and other Dutchmen translated.

We had a pig again like we used to have in Ooltgensplaat—wonderfull I helped a neighbor who had six children, the oldest only six years old. This made me very busy, but I managed. I helped with the washing and ironing and cleaning and they gave us eggs for my help. I also studied my English lessons from my one textbook and dictionary. I would try to put English words together to make sense but I could not speak it.

Sundays we tried to go to church in Roermont with the few old cycles we had left with no tires. In May they had a big Fair with merry-go-rounds, swings, French fried (very expensive) and big dances in the evenings. They ate many pies—for days the farmers' wives are busy baking. They eat and drink and finish their money in three days. They had nice dances every evening—nice people—but I am forbidden to dance.

The fall and winter of 1944 were the darkest hours of the Dutch night before the dawn of liberation. In September of this year the Dutch population rose against the Germans in a premature hope that the Allied airborne landings at Arnhem and Eindhoven would liberate the country. Both of these cities are in western Holland in provinces adjacent to Limburg.

The huge airborne operation, which landed at Arnhem, designed to outflank the German Siegfried Line, was soon isolated and in a heroic stand lost two-thirds of their strength. The remainder were evacuated. However, the landing at Eind-

hoven was successful and this resulted in the liberation during the winter of the Province of Limburg by the English Army. But in most of Holland, outside of three provinces, the war went on. Starvation set in and stalked Holland until May, 1945, when the German resistance collapsed. Here is Rie's account of her experiences:

> The winter of 1944 was bitter cold. In November the English soldiers came nearer and nearer. We had shells over the village all the time. Many came in the woods near our little white house. Every morning we hoped this day would bring our liberation. Every day someone would tell us the English soldiers were very near. Whole groups of German soldiers came through, some on old cycles, some walking, looking very tired and afraid. Sometimes a lonely one would come and ask for a drink and tell us how they were losing. These two weeks we did not feel the occupation very much because the German soldiers kept going north across the Rhine into Germany. Every day seemed ages.
>
> Then November 16th, on an afternoon, Mother was sick and resting and I was ironing when the farm boys came running in. "The English are here!" I threw everything down and ran to see the wonder. There they were—the English! Whole troops, tanks, cars, trucks, the English clean and well-fed looking. They smiled and waved and everybody came from wherever he was and cheered and yelled. It was wonderful!
>
> The first thing they asked for was who could talk English. They found me and that afternoon I started translating—but not very good at first. . . .
>
> The soldiers overfilled the houses and the barns and the same day shells came across the Rhine River, very close, which meaned that the Germans knew the English were there. Next evening we had to leave the little white house which the soldiers took over, for an outlook over the river. Everybody had to go to the big castle to get organized—over forty people had to sleep

in the cellar and cook and eat in one small kitchen. The next day we got organized by the English and we got soap, cigarettes, and chocolate. Many of the children had never seen or tasted chocolate before.

While we were in the castle cellar on the morning of the 18th, father called me from my bed of straw on the floor to help. Mother was in pains and did not want to stay in the cellar with all the people and children. We got some officers to give her a bedroom in the castle. I went to the little building where the soldiers had their kitchen. They had fires and kerosene stoves and heaters and gave me enough hot water. We had only one stove in our cellar kitchen for forty people to do everything. At eleven o'clock the baby, a nice little boy, was born. We called him Tommy after the English soldiers, because he was born on our liberation and because the English soldiers were so helpful and kind. The kitchen soldiers called me in and gave me white bread and butter for Mother—a miracle! Everybody was happy with the little boy, but little Tineke was jealous.

The afternoon of the 20th the officers told everybody they would have to leave the castle as the civilians bothered the plans of the army, being in the front line. The army stopped right at our little white house—did not cross the big road from Germany. Later shells hit the castle and burned it inside.

I went for permission to go to our little white house and packed the few food articles we had left and clothes for the children. We left in big trucks, Mother and the baby in a real car (Red Cross). Ten miles back we stopped in front of a school. We got a classroom for our forty people. The men went out for straw to sleep on and we tried to keep the kids quiet. Mother was taken to a convent, a very good place. The nuns had their own farm—cows, vegetables, and all kinds of food.

That night was very hard, the children restless, and

planes kept bombing in the vicinity, very near. You get used to it but it scares the children. The next morning they wanted to bring us to the city Wueerd to find a place to live. Father did not want to go away from Mother, so he went out to several farmers to find a place to stay. At last he found one who gave us two small rooms for all of us. One small room with an old stove and one small bedroom upstairs for all of us to sleep in. I went out in the barn and slept in the straw—there were too many and I could not stretch out. In the bedroom were two beds with nothing in them, so the boys filled them up with straw.

From then on we had a hard time—getting enough food for the children and keeping them out of mischief. On the farm were about a hundred soldiers and the kids wanted to hang around them because of chocolate, etc. All around the farm were mines in the fields, put by Germans. Exploding bombs and shells were common and it was hard to keep the children away, but we managed.

Mother got very lonely in the convent. At seven o'clock she had to go to sleep, only one hour for visitors and nobody to talk to. After eight days she talked father into getting her on the farm in our two rooms, which made it even harder with the baby and she not strong. The food away from the convent was not right for Mother and the baby.

December was bitter cold, snow and icy rain. Tried to keep warm with overcoats on our beds. We did not have enough clothes to keep us warm so father wanted to go to the little white house for what we left. I got a pass from the English officer and father and I cycled down about noontime. We found the house in a mess, dirty and burned over. Every case and closet was emptied on the floor and everything of value was taken out. I saw marks of soldiers' boots and after half an hour some came in. They were very embarrassed. When it was getting dark and time for us to go back

things were not half cleaned up so I decided to stay and try to find an officer who could stop the stealing and damaging.

Father left. The officer in charge, a very handsome young Englishman, came down. He helped me make a fire (my hands were blue and stiff from the cold) and he told me he was sorry and would look after the men. . . . After he left I looked for food—the only things left were some potatoes, onions, and lard from the pig, so I had these fried in an old pan. I slept with my friends on the farm who were left to look after the cattle. The next day I got permission to bring the family back to the little white house. Mother was very sick living in the two rooms—everything was so dirty.

Then we had our first rations since September. The day before Christmas each person got half a bar of chocolate, five lumps of sugar and one ounce of egg powder. Even with bombs and shells it was a happy Christmas. Snow covered the fields and in the lane the soldiers were keeping guard in their holes. I got some imitation coffee and some milk and brought them each a cup. Day after day we had English soldiers in our home. We liked them and it was good for my English speaking. One day Marius brought an Englishman by name of Ernest Brittain, in whose home in Eastbourne, Sussex, England I later visited.

Mostly we missed church. I usually went to the Catholic sermon which the priest, a very educated man, gives every Sunday afternoon in the woods. Nunhem is well-known for its beautiful scenery (the woods) and a well dug by Saint Servatius who was thirsty. People think that the water has unusual power. The priest is an artist, a very well known, educated man who is priest to the small village because that gives him time to paint. This sermon is in an open spot in the woods near the little chapel, attended by many people. He talks often about morals and the tourists in Limburg who go around in shorts and sleeveless

dresses, etc. But he is a man of great wisdom and it is interesting to listen.

The unconditional surrender of Germany was signed at Rheims on May 7, 1945. The German forces were disarmed during the period of May 9th to 23rd. Not long after this, and before the displaced Dutch people in western Holland were permitted to return to their homes, Rie made her first trip back to Goeree-en-Overflakkee. Rie wrote to us about it:

> In June 1945 I hitch-hiked to the Haringvliet water separating the mainland from the Island. The Dutch Army who had the ferry would not let me cross. They wanted to clear the Island of mines and fix the broken dykes. There was water in the village and you had to row boats through the streets. But I had to get there just to see—it was my eighteenth birthday and I managed to get there but it was sickening.
>
> In July, father and I went to the Island together. We cleaned the house as good as possible in two-and-a-half days. It was horrible, mud-mud-mud, and everything dead. No living trees or green leaves or flowers —all drowned by sea water.
>
> The village smelled muddy and stank. Many houses were so rotten and awful that people could not live in them. Our house was also terrible and also got shells, one through the roof, and the windows broken. In our cycle barn I found one unexploded shell and father helped me remove it. Most of the good things, cushions, pictures, mirrors, ice skates, books, etc., were stolen. The furniture left was wet and swollen, the linoleum rotten, the paint and paper gone on the walls and blistered on the ceilings.
>
> We had a flower pitcher to drink out of and sat on an old case to eat. One baker was back and we had a coupon for a small white bread a day—lovely. It was made of American flour. We worked hard and returned to Nunhem in Limburg.

In August we got permission to take the family home. Mother was very sick and the baby Tommy not good, malnutrition. Father had returned to the Island again and without much money but great effort had the cellar whitewashed—only one small room—our refrigerator in summer. Also water paint on the walls of the living room and on the shelves. This was a surprise for Mother. I bought cotton yarn from the Belgium black market. Had to do it. I had to knit underwear for all the boys. They had none. With Mother sick and the baby to look after I was very busy.

We had a terrible time getting things to pack in and to get a truck. It rained for days and days. Father had to pay black market prices for packing cases and an old broken down stove. But the black market man was a cheat. Father was walking in the rain to get the final papers; no tram or cycle to the town. I was desperate and stood in the rain for an hour to get a hitch-hike to see the black market man. Finally I got a ride on a truck. I threatened the black market man and he sent the truck and the things. The truck driver kissed me and I slapped him—but I managed.

Crossing Holland in the truck was terrible. The mud was slippery and the truck skidded all the time. The road was full of big holes from bombs, etc., and some holes not fixed at all, but we managed. We brought potatoes and the meat from the pig that was left. Also vegetables as there was nothing to buy on the Island. Only one shopkeeper was there and every fortnight we got some soap, sugar, egg powder, etc. More after the Marshall ships came in.

Mother was up only the first day and after she went to bed in the evening she never got up again. Nobody thought she was going to die except she. She was very sick but always cheerful. After six weeks in bed she complained about an itching leg. It was thrombosis. She got worse and was very tired but she knew what she was saying. Then she died on October 4, 1945. A

month later on November 16th the baby Tommy died of malnutrition and diphtheria.

At first we did not have enough of anything. We had not enough chairs and mattresses—but managed. We had not enough cups or plates or spoons. But we had liberation and were thankful.

Now I was the mother of the family. I had to manage the children and the sugar coupons, textile points and shoe coupons, etc. I cooked, cleaned, scrubbed, and did the washing in a tub outdoors. Every week I scrubbed the cobblestone street in front of the house. I sewed and knit and mended. We had a pig again and I managed to can some meat with very old rubber rings; put two on one glass. I also made a barrel of sauerkraut. I wanted to go on with my English lessons but had to wait. So I went on to read in my spare time, that is in bed late at night, and wrote some letters to some soldiers I had met during liberation.

Christmas was a very happy time after liberation. I made some sweet cakes and managed to have a little something for everybody, like a pair of mittens I knit or a handkerchief. We all got one egg and a bar of chocolate on our ration card which was wonderful. At church they had a Sunday School and the babies got one orange—and we all got one loaf of raisin bread.

In May of 1940, at the time of the German occupation, Father and Mother de Vos had been young parents, forty and thirty-nine years old; Rie was thirteen. The six little brothers—Wim, Bram, Kryn, Marius, Rens, and Johan—were twelve, ten, nine, seven, six, and three; and there were three little sisters—Hannie, Aly, Tinecke—five and four, and Tinecke was hardly a year old. After the liberation in August, 1945, they were all, of course, five years older, and a new little brother, Tommy, had been born in November of 1944.

SIX

Important Decisions

The summer and fall of 1949 were exciting and apprehensive periods in the de Vos home. When would Rie's immigration visa be cleared? Would her sister Hannie be able to take over the household duties? When the clearance finally came, Rie's father resolved the household problem. He told her, "Yes, you can be spared to go to Hans in America."

Janet, the daughter of the Leeders, was closer to Maria than anyone in America, and it was Janet's father and mother who sponsored her. So I have selected three letters written to the Leeders to tell this part of the story:

Ooltgensplaat
April 9, 1949

DEAR JANET AND FAMILY:

Thanks for your long letter, it was such a surprise to find all the things in it and to read all you have written.

I think the patterns are lovely. We do not wear bedsocks as here most time only burns one stove in the house so we must be used to low temperature. That is why we never have hotwater bottles in bed, you must not get spoiled when you have to be in the cold so much. I am giving the bedsocks (Box 18) to an aunt who wears socks in bed.

The slippers would be most useful. This week Hanny left school and every evening she has big holes in her stockings. You cannot wear your shoes the whole day long when working, they would be wornout too soon. I walk on bare feet in summer but the girls are not that "Spartanish."

About the yarn—you must not buy the yarns, you do spend so much money already by sending boxes. When you have yarns pulled out from old things it will be most welcome. We always pull. I have a sweater I reknitted three times; I do not like knit clothes too big so I knitted them yust fitting and when the sweater got too small I pulled it and did it again. The girls like the pattern too. I promised them to teach it so they can try it too.

It seems fun to me to shop in this store on the picture. You never have to wait and you can take or leave it—yust as you want.

We were glad for box 19 and a box from Mr. Keller too. Everything fits so nicely for everybody. I am glad for the pieces of curtains, too. I finished spring cleaning yesterday and got angry when seeing the bareness of our bedroom windows. They need no curtains for they do not look on the street, it is only the bare naked sight.

I was in Rotterdam today and bought two small mats from money I saved from English teaching. They are $3 each. In the war I made four mats from the corners of our wornout carpet but they were wornout, too, after four years. Now I have in Dad's and the girls' bedrooms at least a nice little mat. It lays before the bed.

I was on the market too, there are always old books —how I love to be there! I found six small books with poems, really good ones, for 10 ct. apiece. I am so rich with them! I have a bookcase. Marius made it from old orange cases, it is nice and nearly filled. I read very

much, about three books a week (in bed from 11 and 12 or 1 o'clock). I yust read again *Leave Her to Heaven,* which an American corporal (the one who introduced the *Digest* to me) gave me. I too got *My Friend Flicka* and *Wind, Sand* and *Stars.*

It was nice weather last week (I did the bedrooms) and now it is very cold, storms, high seas and showers, I'll have to change clothes again and give the girls their sweaters (I make them from good wool pieces, pulled, of Dad's and the boys) in winter, for often school has no coal. But we are used to it so it does not matter.

The girls like all funny clothing—they play so much—so they are looking towards the yellow dress. But I told them when the material is suitable for sewing they might sew some useful thing from it. Hanny is on a sewing school one day a week.

Holland has chickens but they export eggs when possible—like all butter. The few eggs and butter left are expensive. We never eat them and only very rich people eat chicken. Yes, I write in French, but I had only 3 months lessons, one hour a week, so I write French very childlike. I am still learning it myself, by books and papers. Kryn and Bram graduate in June and start University in September. Bram had a test, he did not know what he wanted, they say he is suited to become a teacher in gymnastics. He has to attend the Academy in Amsterdam four years. I hope we can do it for him but he needs special clothes for boxing and fencing and what we call a trainings suit (a dark navy blue jacket and trousers of a special woolen stuff). And other sport material too—it will be very expensive. But somehow we will manage.

In a quarter of an hour a girl comes to get her English lessons, and I am still in working clothes. So until next time our best wishes and love.

Yours,
Rie

Ooltgensplaat
August 23, 1949

DEAR FRIENDS:

This week brought me all kinds of good news from you, a box with many useful things and a letter telling me you are willing to be my security. I had received a letter already with the lists of the boxes, and everything was alright in box 20. It arrived quite soon, did not it?

I am so very glad I know everything is all right now, these papers I need for security are the most important I need. I almost cannot understand I will meet Hans within a few months; and all of you who are so very good to me and my family.

The box was a very fine one, everybody enjoyed the unpacking very much. Aly was home from Dordrecht with a friend who seems of a very poor family. Of course I do not ask questions, but I see by her clothes they seem to be short of money. There was a dress and a skirt exactly fitting her, she was so glad!

The nylons and slip are so beautiful. I knew you have slips like that from the ones I received from your boxes, but I never had a new one like that. You will see the nylons when I arrive. I should never have told you but now you give me two pairs of new ones it is yust as well you know how welcome they are. The last years I got myself used to bare legs, I only wore the nylons you sent me in 1947, two years ago, on Sundays and occasions. I made them go two years and only last week they gave up, but I was not so very depressed as I knew you should sent me two pairs of new ones. I was worrying a bit about my legs, I mean what is all right here maybe looks terrible in America and I was saving from the English lessons I gave to buy clothes.

I want so hardly to be nice for Hans, he will be used to well-dressed girls now. I saved the nice black suede pumps you did give me a year ago very much and they are still nice. You will recognize many of your things when I come. So I put the nylons and slip away until

I go on my big yourney. I tried very hard to wait without anybody knowing how I longed for Hans, but now it comes near my self-command leaves me very often. I try to think about my work and everything but all the time this comes back that I will be there before Christmas.

You will not think it queer when I have most of your clothes when I come, will you? You understand that the boys can have so many each year that I yust try to come around with other gifts from boxes. You do not expect me to come like a well dressed lady do you? I know it is a habit to give daughters new clothes when they marry, but I see the boys need it more and besides the clothes you gave me always are very beautiful. I have bought one pair of leathers shoes, like the ones you call moccasins, for my money I earned. I will keep them nice until I come over.

Tieneke was very excited about the scraps; Aly and Hannie, who also like to sew got some pieces from Tieneke. I am very rich with the flowered yersey dress. It seems velvet, so rich are the colours. Why is it so long, I had to put a hem in? Now I have a long dress for Sundays. I never saw such a long zipper. Hannie and Aly have some of the dresses, they are growing into big girls now. The red housecoat I also keep for America, here only rich people have housecoats but I like them, too. Last winter I wore the woolen one you sent me very much when the fire was out and it was cold late at night. I am a bit ashamed about this writing about an unimportant thing like clothes, but the people where Hans stays seem to be very correct and well dressed and I want him to be proud of me.

Yesterday I went to a nice sea sand beach on the North Sea with the four youngest children, we had four cycles as I rode Tieneke, too. It is a 30 mile [kilometer] cycle yourney. We are all burned, it was nice weather, very warm. Bram and Dryn are cycling through Belgium.

When it does not freeze Hans will come to New York by car, then it is not so difficult to drive over to Columbus, is it? I long so hard to meet him.

Dad sold his onion seeds with some profit and we bought a stove in Rotterdam, ours was entirely worn out. I am so proud on it, it is beautiful in the room. I should have gone out for a week on a cycling trip with my girl friend, but her mother fell ill. So I think I will not go out anymore as I soon shall leave home forever. I am worrying about the kids, they are so young to be left alone. But it will always be hard to leave them, they must learn to manage without me. When I know more from the Consulate in Rotterdam I will write again.

Love,
Rie

Ooltgensplaat
October 22, 1949

Dear Janet,

Thanks for your letter. Will you please tell your father and mother box 22 has arrived? I am so busy with all kinds of preparations it seems better to write all the news in one letter. As usually it was a great pleasure to unpack the box. This time I have to give special thanks for the two coats. There is a very warm navy blue coat, with red woolen lining which is fitting Hanny. It is such a beautiful warm coat, I really am getting warm when I only look at her in it. She cycles to sewing school (a six miles distance) every Thursday, and I was glad to see her warm because the weather is terrible stormy and rainy.

The papers were all right. Tuesday I was in Rotterdam at the Consulate for the last medical examination. There was an American doctor, he could not speak Dutch (a nurse translated it). He had a nice car. I could understand him quite well but he did not have the courage to say so. . . . and then I had to vow before the Consul. It was a *she* (is it possible?) Now I

had to pay my visum and this week they are going to send it to me. That means I can go to the steamship line and order my ticket. But first I must wait until I have the exact date of Wim's arrival. He comes home before Christmas, he wrote. Then I am coming in January.

Hans thinks it is best to drive to Columbus, leave the car at your parents and fetch me by train. I would like it, he knows you a bit then, and his way too.

Could you mail me a woman's magazine from this autumn. I will still have ten weeks to see to it. Then I am going to change some clothes of me. I hope I am not annoying with all my asking. I think you understand I have many difficulties in preparing all things.

Love,
Rie

Tuesday evening, January 17, 1950, I left Providence on the New Haven's "Merchant's Limited" after a busy day in the United States Rubber Providence factory. I had a leisurely and satisfying dinner on the train, and I was thinking of the Dutch bride sailing on the "Queen Mary" from Southampton three days later. Her father, at great sacrifice, furnished the over six hundred guilders for her tourist class passage, and Rie had saved a few precious guilders from her English lessons for a cloth coat. She was terribly excited as only a prospective bride coming from overseas could be.

She could not know of the excitement that filled the Stamford–Old Greenwich–Darien–New Canaan area of Connecticut. Telephone lines had been humming for weeks, arranging every little detail. I directed the planning of the practical as far as I could, but, being a mere man, I could only influence, not control. How could any one man tell a group of women, young and old, what a bride's outfit should or should not include? I felt quite unimportant and enjoyed it all more than I would admit.

Then, too, all shapes and sizes of bride's packages were arriving from faraway places. Talk about curiosity! Don't believe men are not curious!

Rie had written that her time in Stamford could only be short, for Hans would not have much time away from his job. The wedding would take place in the Leeder home in Columbus. She probably would not have time to see all the things and go to all the nice places I had planned for her in New York. I knew Hans only as Hans. I did not know his name and address in Michigan. I had sent several messages to him through the Leeders as Rie's sailing plans drew close. I thought it rather strange he did not respond as you would expect a prospective groom to do. Only silence from Michigan.

We did know through my sisters that the Leeders were getting together many of the basic, practical bride-and-groom household items. So the Connecticut girls went all out and wholeheartedly determined to make Rie a lovely American-Dutch bride with a complete trousseau. Every day and evening of Rie's brief contemplated week in Connecticut were planned ahead.

I reached Stamford shortly after nine o'clock. Little did I think of Rie's prophetic letter written two years before—

> But then I cannot go yet until Hannie, twelve years old, grows up more and can look after the family. But it seems such an awful long time to wait and I wonder if we can wait so long.

At home I found Dorothy and our daughter Ann terribly upset. They told me to read the air mail letter received during the day from Rie:

Ooltgensplaat, Holland
13 January, 1950

Dear friends,

I received yours of January 10th. You are so very good to me, and I have to disappoint you so. As you will know from the Leeders, Hans has broken the engagement. I am very unhappy. I was ill for two days but it does not help much to be in bed. I have to think so much. Now my Father has been to the travel agency

in Rotterdam to ask if he could get any of the money back; the fare was 635 guilders and he could not miss it very well. But they said that we have not any right, and when there comes another passenger, we get the money back, but there is not much chance that there will be a passenger. Now Dad said, "You can go yet, and your friends will be good to you."

But then I have to earn my passage back home, and maybe this will be some years before I earned such a lot of money. Then the girls will have a difficult time. Of course, they should have it when I had gone to Hans, but then, that was all my life for me. And we have much trouble in getting a servant girl or woman. Now I go to England yet on Tuesday, and will try to work there some months, and when I get better I can come home and do my duty here. I cannot stay home at the moment, as I feel not well and everything remembers me him. Please do not write him.

Will you ask the Cunard Line if they can give anything back? Dad does not know English and I am so tired and so much to look after. Maybe they can keep the money and one of us could go on the ticket to visit you later on.

Forgive me all the trouble I caused you, and thank you so much for everything.

Yours,
Rie

P.S. I will look for work in England as my friends are poor, they cannot keep me.

At first I was stunned, but almost as quickly I was stung to action. I immediately phoned the Leeders in Columbus. Their daughter Janet answered. Yes, they had received a similar letter that day. Her mother was very upset about it; her father was out of town, knew nothing of this tragedy. So I told Janet to ask her father to telephone me on his return next day, after he had read the letter.

My next move was a perfectly natural one, for me. I phoned

my sister Eva in Columbus. She was startled but not upset or thrown off balance and, as I expected, told me she would pray about it and asked me to keep an open mind and phone her the next evening, too.

My sister Eva, like my incomparable mother, has a beautiful and satisfying philosophy of life due to her implicit confidence and faith in the power of prayer. This was a sleepless night for me, but out of my mental turmoil I decided to bring Rie to America. The next evening my sister amazed me by telling me she knew this would be my decision—that God was reaching out through my channel to lift a poor disillusioned Dutch girl to a new life. She knew I would bring Rie to America where her friends would help heal her deep hurt, and bring about a satisfactory adjustment.

This illustrates the perfect faith that can move mountains. Many times I have thought about this powerful force which dominated my lovely mother's life and I have wished many times I had a bit of her faith in prayer too. I must confess my decision was made during a sleepless and prayerless night. I know, too, others were praying. So let each reader decide for himself.

First thing next morning I stopped in Jim Harley's office. Jim is Director of Traffic in United States Rubber Company. He read Rie's pathetic letter with incredulity reflected in his face. He asked John Cassam, Manager Export and Import Traffic, to come in. John Cassam read Rie's letter and exploded: "Hell, Jim! That's not Cunard Lines talking. That's a European travel agent who doesn't want to lose his commission. The Cunard people are not that kind of folks. I happen to know the 'Queen Mary' is leaving Southampton tomorrow with many vacant tourist cabins." By the time John Cassam had this out of his system he was connected by phone with the Cunard offices. They told him that under the circumstances there would be no question about a refund for Rie's father; just as simple as that. Then John Cassam dictated an airmail letter to Mr. W. Pullen, Dominion Rubber Company, Ltd., 62 and 64 Horseferry Road, London, S.W. 1, England. He asked Mr. Pullen to secure choice tourist accommodations for Rie on the "Queen Mary's" next

westbound trip, February 8th; asked him to go to Eastbourne, Sussex, to meet Rie, check her papers, and see her safely aboard. He told him to charge the passage back through the Export Division's books to the New York office and that I would pay our cashier's department here. Just as simple as that—so we thought then.

In the evening I phoned Joe Leeder and my sister Eva in Columbus to tell them. It was near ten o'clock when I called the New York overseas operator to inquire if the Brittains in Eastbourne, Sussex, had a phone. She connected me with "London Information." A sleepy fellow with an English accent answered. He quickly looked through his listings and said, "No phone under this name or address." Said I to the chap, "Can you send a messenger?" Replied the Cockney, "My Gawd, mon, all our messengers are in bed. Don't you know it's three o'clock in the morning in London? We're five hours ahead of you." I replied, "Thanks, I'll send a cable and make an appointment." Quick as a flash, and I heard the New York overseas operator laugh, the Cockney roared across the Atlantic, "My Gawd, mon, don't do that. Don't spend your money on a cable. Tell me what time you want to talk to the girl from New York and I will have her at a telephone in Eastbourne." Then the New York overseas operator, her circuit key open, picked up the conversation and a date was made to complete the call next morning—2:15 P.M. London time.

When I reached the office I learned from our company chief operator, Miss Kelley, that "Overseas" had acquainted her with the call by appointment. I asked Miss Kelley to keep her key open and help me, but she told me she would stand by, though not with open key. She explained that "Overseas" are the cream of Bell Telephone's highly trained experts and I would get all the understanding help I needed.

The connection was perfect. Just as clear and easy as talking across a desk in a quiet office. Running true to feminine form, Rie, in her excitement, talked a blue streak. She talked so fast the overseas operator had to slow her down and repeat the gist of her spoken thoughts to me. I couldn't get a word in edgewise, at five dollars a minute. When she had talked thirty dollars

worth, hardly stopping to catch her breath, I told "Overseas" to explain I would do the remainder of the talking—fifteen dollars more, and hung up. That was one of the most satisfying forty-five dollars I ever spent. Later "Overseas" called Miss Kelley —said she had continued talking to the Dutch girl after I shut off the time-clock at nine minutes and she passed along more astonishment from Rie.

The letter Rie wrote immediately following our conversation repeats most of the things that came tumbling over the air from England.

Eastbourne, Sussex
England
19 January, 1950

DEAR MR. KELLER,

This morning Mrs. Brittain awoke me to give me your message. . . . Now we went up and I spoke with you, it was so wonderful, I never knew it was possible. When we phone from Ooltgensplaat to Rotterdam, we cannot understand each other, and I could understand you very well! Now I write you too, to save time. I know now you really want me to come, and I do not want to cost you a lot of money.

Now as I said, I believe there is a possibility of going to the U.S.A. as a working passenger, but I am not very cool-headed at the moment, and cannot manage anything. So if you want me, you'll have to do everything. You'll have to book me on a boat, before the 15th of February because my visa is only going to that date. You'll have to send me a paper which I can show, that you pay for me when I am in New York because otherwise they will not let me on the boat. You have to have some dollars, but you must be able to tell them where you got them, so even if you sent them it is no good, as laws are so complicated. You maybe can make them take me on an English or American boat before the 15th of February, because you know much. They will not take me when I ask, and

I am at my wits end too, feeling so strange and tired. I am telling you all this because I know it is lots of trouble for you, so do not start it when you think it is too difficult.

I am not able to give you anything back. . . . I am so grateful to you, you really did a lot for me, it feels so good having people care for you like that. I felt badly, all this week, am trying to be cheerful but I can only play it, I am not really. But I am feeling better now. Mrs. and Mr. Brittain are very good, but they are working people and everything rationed, so they cannot very well keep me.

I had a letter today from Essex, people who wanted me for a domestic help, but now I'll wait your news, as you told me. You know I should like to come, only do not forget I have a little less than ten pounds sterling and cannot ask Dad for money now. I can hardly believe anyone would care so much for a poor working Dutch girl to take me to America. It is all like a fairy story in a book we have in Holland. I feel like a princess and am afraid I will wake up and find it is only a dream.

I think about the "Queen Mary" sailing tomorrow and how my plans are broken and about the boat without me.

Maybe everything comes out right yet. Do greet everybody for me and I hope I can tell you myself how good all of you are to me.

Yours,
Rie

But the "Queen Mary" reservation did not turn out to be as simple as expected. In fact, as in many of the "best laid plans of mice and men," the hand of fate intervened. Back came a cable to John Cassam from Mr. Pullen of our London office: "'Queen Mary' booked solid, due to seamen's strike in French ports and sailing cancellation of the westbound French Line 'Ile de France.'" John cabled back, "Keep trying to break the

'Mary.' De Vos visa expires February 15th." But it could not be done although John assured me Cunard would get her out by the deadline.

Meanwhile I got busy, going to the Immigration offices in Manhattan. I waited at the office of the Consulate General of the Netherlands in Rockefeller Center while a cable was sent to U.S. Immigrations in Rotterdam and a phone call made to the State Department in Washington. All I got for my time and effort was the monotonous repetition, "Quota immigration visas cannot be extended for any reason (unlike visitors' visas). Aliens coming to America on such visas, which permit permanent residence and citizenship, must be on shipboard and clear the last foreign port by or before midnight of the expiration date."

At this time only the "Mary" of the "Queens" was in service. The "Elizabeth" was in drydock getting renovated and refurbished for the spring and summer season. French sailings were tied up by strikes and American sailing schedules westbound did not meet the visa expiration date. I was worried; John Cassam wasn't. He kept saying, "Cunard Lines will do it." Finally John received a cable from Mr. Pullen in London telling him that Rie was booked to sail on the "Queen Elizabeth's" first westbound sailing from Southampton on the evening of February 15th, the expiration date of her visa. Except for the friendly, interested efforts of the United States Rubber Company, Rie would have been left behind in Europe.

However, only a brief respite of relief. Every day for a week before sailing time, *The New York Times* carried the news of unusual gale winds and storms ranging in the eastern North Atlantic and of disastrous lashings of English Channel ports. It was during this period that the luxury liner "America" was badly damaged and had her bow stove in trying to tie up in an English port. But all's well that ends well. *The New York Times,* the morning of February 16th, listed the "Queen Elizabeth" as enroute. A news item on the marine page told of daring British seamen performing a miracle of moving the "Elizabeth" from drydock to loading pier in the teeth of a gale, to maintain their "on schedule" tradition. Thus did Cunard

Lines come through as John Cassam expected. And here is a letter from Rie, telling of Mr. Pullen's traditional British courtesy.

Eastbourne, Sussex
England
Friday-3-February 1950

DEAR FRIENDS,

Tuesday Mr. Pullen from London visited me and he came up again today to tell me he had managed to get a ticket for me on the "Queen Elizabeth," leaving the 15th of February from Southampton. I am so glad that it is really true now, I really am coming to you! Mr. Pullen is a very nice gentleman, he took my papers, passport, etc., to London on Tuesday and brought them back today. He did not trust them to the post, he said, which was very kind of him, as he must be a very busy man and it takes two and a half hours to come here from London.

I am so excited to think I'll meet you after only sixteen days now. It will be very long days waiting! And to think I'll really meet everybody. . . . At home on the Island they are very excited and grateful to you and agree with me that it is quite a fairy tale.

Mr. Pullen suggested me to come to London to take the boat train. He will have a Cunard gentleman to the boat train in Southampton. I think it quite unnecessary but as he wants it, it is better that way. I have a nice cabin reservation and am very glad because I like that very much.

Yours,
RIE

SEVEN

Rie Sails

Mr. Pullen and Rie compromised on the departure plans. Rie went direct from Eastbourne to Southampton, avoiding London. A Cunard official, Mr. Gray, met Rie at the Southampton station and she was a guest of Cunard for a tour of the "Queen Elizabeth" before sailing. Mr. Gray drove her around the city of Southampton and then joined her for dinner on shipboard. He introduced her to the ship's officers and to her dining room steward; he explained the ship's menu, as she had never before ordered a meal in a restaurant or hotel. And so at last Rie was on her way.

Gale winds and mountainous seas made the crossing a stormy one, and the ship was running late. Old man North Atlantic spread an epidemic of mal-de-mer. It was the one day delay over the normal five day schedule that kept me in a state of suspense. John Cassam had secured pier privilege passes from "Immigration and Customs," but our plans to leave Stamford at the crack of dawn on Monday to meet the 7:30 docking schedule on February 20th had to be cancelled. Docking and departure schedules of the "Queens" in New York Harbor are controlled, twice every twenty-four hours, by the tides. The "Queen Elizabeth" would miss the 7:30 morning high tide and could not dock until the evening high tide—thirteen hours later—based on the tide schedule for this date.

Ordinarily such a minor delay would have meant nothing, but there were special reasons why it was different this time.

I was scheduled to leave New York the following day, with a group from headquarters, for business meetings in Philadelphia and Chicago. So, Monday morning, instead of going to "Pier 50," I barged into John Cassam's office. I asked him if I could get Rie off the "Queen Elizabeth" that night. If not, I would have to make other arrangements, as I could not change my departure plans for the following morning. John phoned the Cunard Lines—yes, the ship would tie up at dock between half past eight and half past nine that night.

Then, very seriously, John told me I did not have a burglar's chance to get the Dutch girl off before Tuesday morning. Said John, "Capacity load. They will be unloading baggage until the wee small hours. The pier will be mobbed and passengers will be going through customs all night long. Then, too, you have two strikes on you before you start. The Dutch girl is tourist class and immigration quota, worked last by immigration inspectors because quota persons require meticulous attention on account of their permanent residence intentions." But, for all his serious, sober face, there was a twinkle in his merry eyes as he dialed a number. Well, exceptions can sometimes be made, and we knew that Rie would not have much baggage that could cause delay.

I worked at my desk until about seven o'clock and then walked over to Lindy's, on Broadway, for dinner. I was excited, I will admit. Rockefeller Center and Cunard Lines, Street Pier are separated by only five blocks. My office is located on the fifteenth floor on the Avenue of the Americas side of the United States Rubber Company Building in Rockefeller Center, known from coast to coast as "1230," which is the building address. Hereafter, I shall designate our building as "1230" in this story. My office windows face west and south. Toward the west one can look directly across the piers and the Hudson River into New Jersey. The south window looks directly to the Empire State tower and across Times Square, across the southwest Manhattan skyscape toward New York Harbor.

The goings and comings of liners from all over the world can be glimpsed now and again between the tall buildings. The "Marine and International Airways News" page in *The New*

York Times has always interested me. Especially do I watch the arrivals and departures of the "Queens," just as I watch the fortunes and standing of the Brooklyn Dodgers in the National League. Often through my air-tight windows, I can hear the hoarse throaty whistle blasts and feel the vibration of the ocean liners near by. Then I look out and see the busy, huffing-puffing tugs turning the towering ships into their various slots up and down the river. But this is as close as I had ever been to the big liners.

The evening I picked to get my first close-up of any large ocean liner, and this the "Queen Elizabeth," was the coldest night of our entire winter season in New York. A bitter, arctic wind was howling through the Manhattan canyons. Few people were on the streets and Broadway looked deserted.

The warm waiting room at Pier 50 was jam-packed with folks waiting for the "Elizabeth's" arrival. The milling mobs of "folks and people" are not permitted on the pier, as that would cause endless confusion in the baggage unloading and customs inspection. However, my pass permitted the courtesy of the pier, along with reporters, press photographers and, of course, Grover Whelan, New York's official greeter, who never misses meeting the Queens.

I walked through the enclosed pier shed, the concrete floor cold as ice slabs, to the lookout point outside the building, jutting far out into the river. The frigid, cutting wind was howling from the northwest—down river. I stomped my feet and swung my arms to keep warm. Not another soul dared the concrete tip and I seemed frozen to the spot. It was excitement, rather than robust heartiness, that kept me there.

From down river, slowly moving up, came the towering, majestic "Queen Elizabeth." Every window, every porthole was ablaze with light. The ship, completely bathed by dazzling searchlights, with Cunard pennants and Union Jacks proudly flying, was surrounded by what seemed by comparison to be tiny, but powerful tugs, tooting their whistle signals, streamers of white steam from their exhausts flowing down river. When the ship was in the slip, mooring cables going overboard, I returned to shelter.

As you know, Rie was greatly concerned about her clothes and appearance by American standards. We knew that most of her limited wardrobe would be sent back to Holland for her sisters to wear or grow into. I expected her to be hatless and I was interested to see one of her prized possessions—the red shoes her father had given her. Just why I thought the red shoes would remind me of the Technicolor movie "The Red Shoes," I do not know.

A hush of silence fell over the small group at the foot of the gangplank as the ship's doors opened. Reporters were poised with pencil and pad; photographers were ready with their flash bulbs to catch the mink and silk that would step out on the red carpet. Just as promised by John Cassam, Rie walked off first, followed by a white-coated steward carrying her valise which had a strap around one end to keep it closed. She wore a white scarf tied around her head; a nice green-and-black-checked cloth coat which she had earned by her English lessons; a bursting, overflowing brown plastic bag hung from her shoulder. And, of course, she was wearing red shoes.

Her blue eyes were alive and dancing, her whole face was animated with happiness and wonderment but, in her excitement, I knew she did not recognize me in the little crowd knotted around the foot of the gangplank. So I called to her and all eyes turned to the Dutch girl and her new "American father."

Little did I know then that she was looking for a rich American—which I later learned from her diary:

> My rich American friend for over two years whom I only knew from letters and pictures. I thought he was fabulously rich because of the new shoes he had sent me and my brothers and sisters and of his airmail letters typed by his secretary. Then I did not know that many people in this country have new shoes as soon as the soles are getting thin—that they do not go to the shoemaker and have their shoes soled many times until the upper part is worn out and can no longer be patched.
>
> That evening I looked, but all my practical sense

and usual calmness had left me since the great moment I saw the Statue of Liberty, since the skyline of New York appeared before us. My throat felt closed and my heart was pounding and if my American Pops had been ten times as tall as he is I still would have overlooked him. But he called me—he knew. A tall man with glasses, somewhere in his fifties; he looked like my Mother's father and uncles and his few kind words made me lost my fear.

Many thoughts had crossed my mind since the day I left Holland. Would I be nice enough, would they be ashamed of me in my old clothes, with my Dutch face that had never seen any makeup, my plain shoulder-long hair without any permanent? Would they be embarrassed by my country manners—these people that lived in an entirely different world than mine of working hard and living among simple farmers?

But after just a few minutes with Pops on the pier I knew that they judged by my letters, my thoughts, and what they knew of me rather than by my appearance.

We hailed one of the many customs officers. He looked at Rie and at her valise. He seemed to know this was a simple job. In rapid, staccato tones he asked, "What's your name? Where you from? Where you going? What's in the valise?" To his question about the unpretentious valise she replied, "All my possessions." Said Mr. Customs, "Sign here."

As we walked through the long pier shed, almost the first passenger cleared, I asked her about her fiery red hands, wrists, and face. She told me of standing on the windswept deck to see the New York City skyline rise above the horizon—about the background of the millions of lighted windows in the Manhattan skyscrapers, but most important, she told me, was the Statue of Liberty holding the lighted torch of freedom high above her head. It was apparent that she felt "From her beacon hand glows world-wide welcome."

We picked up a taxi on 50th Street and drove east. Her first

comment, "My! What many automobiles. I did not know there were so many cars in the world as I see here." When we passed the RCA building in Rockefeller Center I thought she would hurt her neck looking up through the glass top of the taxi. Then, crossing Fifth Avenue, she asked to stop the taxi and out she got into the bitter-cold wind to look straight up at the tall buildings. She was greatly moved by her first impression of New York, and I was greatly impressed by her. I was simply astounded at her command of the English language and her versatile vocabulary. She talked slowly but without hesitation. You could almost see the cogs turning in her head as she translated her Dutch thoughts into English words and expressions. She looked at me and said, "It is almost too much—New York. New York! It throbs in my throat. All the lights, and this after years of darkness and blackout—another world, another life before me—my thoughts are turning like windmill blades through my head."

Of course there were rough spots in her pronunciation. Her conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions were at times a little mixed. Her "th's" were "z's"—her "fazer," her "bruzer," etc. Her suitcase was a "shootcase," a suit a "shoot," "goot morning" and "goot evening." Her conversation has always been interesting and to the point. All you have to do is throw the switch by a question and off she goes straight down the main track.

We reached Grand Central at street level on the Vanderbilt Avenue side, entering on the wide marble balcony that looks across the station toward Lexington Avenue. She stopped by the broad marble rail and for a few minutes was in a trance. I just set her "shootcase" on the floor and froze to the spot, watching her face, for I realized that this was a special moment for her. Her perplexed eyes swung across the sky-blue dome with its twinkling stars and the gold-painted constellations marching across the heavens. She was entirely oblivious to my presence. Finally she turned to me, her face alive with wonderment, and said, "I never knew it could be so beautiful. Everything is so pretty and clean in America. This is not a station. I must have misunderstood. I thought big stations to be black and dark like

Victoria in London or Maas in Rotterdam. This must be a theatre, all the people well dressed, no working class. I never saw so much light—after the few lanterns in our island village."

Nor could she understand or believe Grand Central was a railroad station until I showed her the train gates and explained that only trains under electric motive power came into New York City. This satisfactorily explained the cleanliness and brilliant beauty. With that, I picked up her "shootcase" and we marched down the broad marble steps to the main level. We had just missed a ten o'clock express by a matter of minutes and for this I was not sorry. We checked her "shootcase" in the most amazing gadget. She was flabbergasted and delighted as a child when I gave her a coin for the locker. "How clever, you Americans," she said, as she looked at the key in her hand.

She looked at the beautiful four-faced bronze clock atop the information booth and said, "It looks like gold and jewels." I explained we had an hour and a half, so that there would be time to look around a bit. Train gates, shops, waiting rooms, and so on. She was intrigued by the names of the trains over the gates. At that hour they were the "Chicagoan," "Genesee," "Cayuga," "Tuscarora," "South Shore Express," "Owl," "Narragansett." Said Rie, "How wonderful all your trains have such pretty names." We walked out on the streets—Vanderbilt, 42nd, Park, and Lexington, and I explained how Grand Central is completely surrounded by tall buildings—office buildings and hotels.

The thick, lush carpets on the stairs and in the lobby of one of the hotels made her gasp and clutch my arm. "But are we allowed here?—we don't belong here," she said. She was almost frightened, but I reassured her and calmed her down.

Then, back the length of the station, under Vanderbilt Avenue, to the huge incoming bulletin board big as the side of a barn. I could hardly break her away from watching the attendant on the rolling ladder from which he was posting the delayed arrivals, plenty of them due to the bitter-cold weather. Through trains were running very late—"The Empire State Express" from upper New York State, "The Merchant's" and "The Gilt Edge" from New England points.

From the interesting bulletin board we walked upstairs to the lobby of the Biltmore Hotel. At the top of the wide, carpeted stairs at the entrance of the lobby stood two immaculate doormen, dressed in white uniforms, white shoes and gloves, and a touch of gold braid. I did not notice them, but they threw a scare into Rie; she didn't realize that they were probably just interested in the pretty little stranger. She stopped dead still in front of them, put her hand on my arm and said, "Mr. Keller, we are not allowed in here."

Next on our tour was the lobby of the Roosevelt Hotel, reached by a long connecting tunnel, the hotel shops on the street level and the lobby above. Here I showed her the grill made famous by Guy Lombardo, and we looked in to see the gay dancing crowd.

Train time was coming up so we returned to the station via one of the underground passages that connect the nearby hotels and the station. We were thirsty and stopped at a Nedick's "stand up to the counter" for an orange drink. Rie saw people drinking coffee and asked if she could have coffee instead of an orange drink. She said, "It smells so good. Isn't it nice for the men to turn the faucets and see coffee and milk and what-not come out? What are the red things frying? How good it is to see food where there is plenty of it. But I cannot see any working-class people. To me all these people look like rich people." When she had finished her cup of just ordinary coffee and I had explained the mysteries of frankfurters and hamburgers she said, "Mr. Keller, that is the best coffee I ever tasted." I replied, "Would you like another cup?" She looked at me with surprise and asked, "But could I? Can a person have more than one cup?" She was serious; and when I told her she could have as many more cups as she liked, she could not believe *I* was serious. She said, "If it is all right, I would like just one more cup."

And now about the red shoes. They were red, made of heavy calfskin, and not really so different in style after all. What made them important, you see, was that Rie had been more accustomed to wearing wooden shoes, and besides that, these were the first red shoes she had ever owned. Unfortunately they did

not fit very well, because there was not much choice of size on the little island, and in the quiet station the clop-clop sounded much like wooden shoes, with resounding echoes thrown back from the marble walls.

EIGHT

Stamford, Connecticut

Our train was just an ordinary commuters' express to Stamford, Bridgeport, and New Haven. As we entered the coach Rie stopped at the door and exclaimed, "What a beautiful train. What easy seats upholstered with plush material that you only find in expensive first-class compartments in Holland!" She was interested in my evening New York *World-Telegram and Sun*" and simply incredulous about the following morning's *New York Times* which I picked up in the station. "How can even Americans have tomorrow morning's paper tonight?" she wanted to know. She pointed to a "news-butch" coming through the car and said, "Look at the man with food in a box—wherever you go in New York you find food."

During our short hour ride I told her "Mr. and Mrs. Keller" was a little on the formal side, told her to take her time and make up her own mind what to call us. I suggested "Nannie" and "Pops" for her consideration. I told her our granddaughter, Barbara, called Dorothy "Nannie." So it quickly became "Nannie" and "Pops." It was after midnight when we reached home. I would be leaving for Philadelphia and Chicago before she would be up next morning, so I left Rie and Nannie in easy chairs under a soft light to get acquainted.

When I returned from my trip I asked her about her first impressions of her new American home. She went to her bedroom, brought out her diary and read from it:

We took a cab in the station and my heart was pounding as we came near the house. Lovely country houses with many trees around, and hills. Even at night I knew I liked it. And there at the door was Nannie. She was so different from her picture—not a sophisticated lady, but a sweet, kind woman. We sat in one of the big chairs in a nice room. To me the house is a dream—carpets, light walls, easy chairs, a television set.

My bedroom is a fairy tale—a lot of bottles on the dresser, which I smelled one after one—lipstick, powder. Two beds with rubber mattresses, a lamp to read in bed. A dish of apples as a bedtime snack.

The bathroom is even more exciting. Tiles, black and white, a little closet behind the mirror, also full of bottles and jars, a real bathtub, beautiful towels. It looks like a room from a magazine. In my town of four thousand people we yust have two bathrooms, for the doctor and the mayor. I went to bed with many things to think about. My first night on American ground with real friends. I knew I was going to like it.

When I awoke my first morning in America it was strange to understand the dream had come true. Since I was a child I had wished to see all the strange fancy places I had read about. Here I was—and the first thing was to take a bath in that fancy bathroom.

All the time Rie was in America she was excited and thankful about bathrooms—they were top-level American luxuries for her.

Rie's first week here dispelled any lingering doubt that I might have had about the wisdom of bringing her into such a different atmosphere. Just as I expected, she kept her sturdy, practical Dutch feet firmly on the ground. Every new adventure added cubits to her character and she remained completely unspoiled. Remember, she came to America with a background of experience and "know-how" in the unvarnished,

bare facts of what makes life tick the world over. She was to see and sample more of the basic pattern of the American fabric and pattern in a scant eight months, February to October of 1950, than many native-born Americans see in a lifetime.

Now I think you should have the last chapter of the "red shoes," and this also introduces our friend, Morris.

Morris Spelke knows all about shoes, and he should because he is one of Connecticut's leading shoe merchants. Most of the many boxes Nannie and Pops sent to the de Vos family in Holland were packed in the Spelke Stamford store with Morris's help. From the start he had a keen interest in the Dutch girl in Goeree-en-Overflakkee and, as you might expect, on several occasions he had shoes ready to tuck in for the various little brothers and sisters.

Morris had said that Dorothy should be sure to bring Rie to his store on her first day. In the store Nannie and Morris learned the background of the red shoes. They were Holland's best and a gift from her father. They would have been an authentic touch of the Netherlands to the Dutch folk in western Michigan where Rie had expected to live. And, quite rightly, she was proud of the best shoes she ever owned.

Morris looked at the size of the red shoes, then measured her foot. Perplexed, he repeated the looking and measuring. Then he picked out a smart suede strap shoe, several sizes longer—it fit like Cinderella's slipper. She told him her feet hurt her "terrible." She had worn her red shoes constantly, for weeks, walking much in England and on the decks of the "Queen Elizabeth." She explained her sore feet—"I never before wore leather shoes all day." But Morris knew better. Her too short shoes were responsible for her blistered heels and cramped, aching, sore toes. Morris gave her two pairs of shoes and three pairs of nylon hose. He told her she could never wear her red shoes again. That is the reason the shoes went back to Holland.

Mrs. Spelke had come there to meet Rie. She, too, was charmed with our Dutch girl. Evidently her eye had done a bit of measuring, because a few days later some lovely clothes arrived that fitted Maria as if they had been tailored to her measure.

While Rie was dressing on her first morning in America, Nannie had asked her how she would like her eggs prepared for breakfast. Eggs! Could it be possible people in America could have fresh eggs any time they wanted? In Holland only the very rich could have fresh eggs, and in England, where she stayed before sailing, such a luxury has been unknown for many years, too.

On the breakfast table was a toaster. She watched it intently, like a child, and when it popped up with golden brown toast she laughed like a child with a musical toy on Christmas morning. The electric "coffee master" was a thing of awe and beyond her immediate comprehension. She could hardly believe the butter was butter—surely it must be margarine. Fresh fruits in February? How could that be? Nor could she understand the several radios—"wireless'," she called them—and having one on her night table all for herself. Using her expressive hands to make her point, she said, "Imagine a radio in almost every room of the house and so many people in Holland do not have a single wireless in the whole house."

All the time she was at the breakfast nook table, her eyes were watching the big, white, gleaming refrigerator. Finally, her curiosity got the best of her—the brief glimpses when Nannie opened the door were too much. So Nannie told her to go over and see for herself. It was plain this was not a refrigerator in the average American home; rather, it was something right out of a story book—such stuff as dreams are made of. As she walked across the kitchen she smiled and said, "In Holland our cellar is our cool place—we do not have an ice-box."

She started with the fruit and vegetable compartment at the bottom of the refrigerator. The head of cabbage and the carrots she understood, but that was about all. Who could possibly have tomatoes, fresh lettuce, and green peppers in the winter time? Oranges are only for the very rich in Holland and she had seen grapefruit for the first time on the "Queen Elizabeth." Lemons she had seen only in pictures and on fruit stands.

All the time you knew she was thinking of her father, brothers, and sisters and this came out when her eyes inspected

the main compartment. She picked out a glass jar of prepared frozen orange juice and carried it back to the breakfast table, saying, "Nannie, this we never had at home. This I know from my magazines is what my little brothers and sisters needed so desperately after the war—you call them vitamin C, is it not?"

But the modern magician was in the frozen-food compartment. The imaginations of the world's greatest fairy-story tellers —Hans Christian Andersen with his tales, the two gentle German scholars who lived over a hundred years ago, Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm—could not conjure the miracle of America which we accept with such nonchalance. America, seen through the Dutch girl's eyes, had a new and different meaning—an awakened appreciation of "America the Beautiful."

Frozen foods in a home? How could it be? Frozen fruits—impossible! Frozen fruit juices: how can you make so much out of so little? Ice cream in the winter? Nannie told Rie she would take her to a Howard Johnson's where there is a choice of twenty-eight flavors of ice cream. Rie just looked blank at that one. She did not understand: "In my village we have two kinds and only in the summer—both vanilla—the only difference is which of the two bakers had made it—one uses more water than the other."

Fortunately, many of Maria's letters from America to her father and Hannie were saved. We had them returned from Holland, translated from Dutch into English, to pick up many first impressions that otherwise might be lost. Her letters to family and friends in Holland were many and we encouraged her in this by keeping her well supplied with postage stamps. Here is her first letter from America—to her father:

Stamford, Connecticut
23/2/50

Dear Father,

Just arrived. Everything went so smoothly. There was a gentleman at the train in Southampton (through U.S. Rubber). He is a nice young man of Cunard lines —a Mr. Gray . . . I was first aboard the "Queen Eliza-

beth." Mr. Gray was allowed to go all over, so he showed me first class, etc., and showed me all over the ship. In New York I was the first one that left the ship. Grand Central is enormous—never saw anything as clean and beautiful—big and all marble and stone.

The house is like from a fairy tale—all is so much luxury and yet practical. A beautiful bathroom—big white kitchen, with a real refrigerator! Big living room. In the bathroom are real scales. They have real cream with their meals and ice cream in winter.

Dad—this country is very beautiful. They find out more ways and gadgets—things I thought that maybe would be in Holland in 100 years from now are old here. They have frozen foods—even fresh fruits, vegetables, etc., in the winter. They also have two windows in the winter—the outside one is called a storm window. They have big, comfortable, soft chairs with horrible covers over them with flowers and stripes.

I never know how old the women are—they put a lot of stuff on their faces which I find in my room. I take a bath every single day—and they have an electric dryer when you wash your hair. I was in a home yesterday where the heat comes from the ceiling! ! Yesterday I saw girls on television in a roller skating match—not children but grown-ups—and they were very mean to each other.

They took my picture and in two minutes it was a photograph! I got twenty presents on a thing they call a shower—all people bring a present for you—many nice things too good for me—it is some kind of a party. They treat me like a princess.

Yours,
Rie

Rie spent two short kaleidoscopic weeks in Connecticut before going west. Dorothy's group of friends and our daughter Ann's younger married set seemed to think of the greatest va-

riety of things that Rie should see and do. Two of Dorothy's friends had planned a shower for Rie if she had come to be married, and now they just decided to surprise her anyway.

I remember coming home one evening to freshen up before going out to dinner. Rie met me at the door, her face simply radiant. "Come and look, Pops," she said. "Never was there such a Christmas." Nannie's bridge club had given her a shower in the afternoon and the dining room table was laden. One by one she showed me each gift, just like a little child on Christmas morning. You know what—slips, panties, petticoats, stockings, scarves, skirts, hankies, gloves, personalized stationery, and stuff and stuff.

Then there was Rie's first experience in a huge supermarket. Words fail me on this and Nannie cannot adequately describe this except to talk about Rie's excited incredulity. She had heard about the "land of plenty" but reading about "plenty" must have been quite different from seeing it the American way. So let's go to the diary:

> Nannie took me to a big super market where you take a thing like a big baby carriage and go along rows of food. You take what you want. I got very uneasy when I saw Nannie take all these things—she would be honest about it but what about other people, poor people who had this temptation? Later I saw how you have to pass somebody who packs your goods. This store is like heaven—how I wish my brothers and sisters could see it. Rows of cans, all kinds of vegetables, fruits, meats, cheeses—everything you can dream about.
>
> I was sorry we had to leave so soon, I could have spent a day there looking at all of it. At home we all had a terrible fear, we were scared that we did not have enough to eat, and even five years after the war I still tried to buy little things, a tin of meat, a box of oatmeal, and hid it for later. One never knew. Here in this store, some of this fear disappeared. If there was so

much food, maybe we would never have to be hungry again. But then my family is over there with almost no tins, none of the strange foods I saw here—in a continent filled with angry Germans and Russians.

It was getting noontime and still Nannie did not go home. Then she explained, "we can eat out." This sounded very strange. Who eats out and pays for it when you are right near home? In my town of four thousand there is one eating out place and nobody ever eats there except salesmen or other travelers that visit our town. I was excited to hear we were going to eat out. Except on the "Queen Elizabeth" I never ate anywhere else than in a home.

We stopped in front of a nice white house with an orange roof which Nannie told me was a Howard Johnson. What did I want? On the menu were many things I did not know of, and I asked Nannie what she wanted. A hamburger, and she explained what it was. I love trying new things—always. So there was my first hamburger. What a cute thing to fit your meat in the bread—a roll that is round for the hamburger and a long roll for the frankfurters which I have not tried out. We had ice cream for dessert—one of twenty-eight kinds—how unbelievable!

Nor could you expect a man to describe Rie's interesting reaction to the strictly feminine. But Nannie says that lipstick interested her most, and colored fingernail polish next. On Nannie's dressing table were all kinds of cosmetics, perfumes, toilet waters, and such, which Rie explored in great detail. Most all of these things are considered the work of the devil by Goeree-en-Overflakkee folks; many were unknown, except through pictures in an occasional American magazine that finds its way to the island.

Rie needs no rouge—you would not paint a lily—but, like a duck to water, she took to the other feminine charms that come in bottles, jars, and tubes. We knew then, for sure, the natives of Goeree-en-Overflakkee would look her over most carefully

when she returned to Holland—some out of sheer curiosity, some with admiration and no doubt some with lifted eyebrows.

Ash Wednesday fell two days after her arrival and Dorothy took her to church service. Said Rie, "I can't tell how old are American women because of their make-up." But by the same token she was lip-sticked when she went to church with Nannie —done by herself. A few days later Nannie took her to a meeting of St. Elizabeth's Guild in the parish house of St. John's Episcopal Church:

> Today Nannie took me to a guild meeting. To me the ladies looked very worldly, they even smoked except Nannie didn't. They were all made up heavily, lipstick, polish, powder. I could not even tell how old they were with their youthful clothes.
>
> On the island most women wear black or dark after they are forty—and no decent woman wears make-up. I expected them to read from the Bible and sing hymns or pray, like in our meetings. Nothing of this happened except they said grace before eating their gingerbread and coffee.
>
> It seems everywhere Americans come together they eat. Never before had I heard of eating in connection with the church—no church dinners or desserts. Maybe once in a year we bring our sandwiches when the young people come together in one central town on the Island to have a speaker or maybe some songs or reciting. It was all very strange to me and did not seem very right in a church meeting.
>
> Of course you need time to understand and see, and sometimes doing good work like these women did, giving clothes and money shows your love to God more than endless Bible chapters do. But I can yust see the faces when, on our meetings, I will say, "Let's eat something when we come together and talk about doing some good work instead of discussing whether Jonah

really was in the fish or not." Every time has its own habits and on the little Island we are on a point where America was a hundred years ago. What is better?

Even the most simple, everyday routine experiences in our land of plenty seemed to be special adventure for our young visitor. She was simply delighted, charmed, and intrigued by television, despite her occasional embarrassment caused by the beautiful, talented women with extreme hair-do's, bare shoulders and midriffs and, shall I say, deep-plunging necklines? A family buffet supper at our daughter's home—now what could be unusual about that? But:

Nobody ever heard of a buffet supper on the Island. My first buffet supper was at Ann Keller Towne's house. Her parents and father and mother-in-law were the other guests. Here we were peaceful in our chairs when Ann said, "Everything is ready." On the dining room table was a big bowl with salad, vegetables, sliced ham, bread, butter, and everybody took a plate and put on it what he wanted.

Then we sat down in the living room again with our plates somewhere in our laps. For not like the houses on my Island where you have a big table in every room—no, in these homes the only big table is in the dining room. During the supper everbody talks, you do not have to think about passing dishes or if you take too much—it is a very easy way to eat. And always in America there is all you want to eat—how nice don't you think?"

NINE

Roundabout Manhattan

It was a perfectly beautiful, late winter Sunday—no snow, bright sunshine, blue skies and a warm wind which westerners would call a "chinook." Nannie and I had decided to show Cinderella the New York city with the Dutch flavor. So we left "Stamford-on-the-Merritt-Parkway" early in the morning.

Several miles out of Stamford, on the parkway, I told her we were passing Old Greenwich, Connecticut, where Hendrik Willem van Loon had recently lived, worked, and died. I told her she must remember van Loon, who was born and became a famous writer in his beloved old town of Veire on the Isle of Walcheren—a neighboring island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee.

We crossed Westchester County in New York on the direct route to the site of Fort Nieuw Amsterdam on the most southern tip of Manhattan Island. As we crossed the East River—which makes Manhattan an island—on the Henry Hudson Bridge Rie saw the section on upper Manhattan Island that is called Harlem. More than a hundred years before the Revolution, Peter Stuyvesant established here the Dutch settlement he called Nieuw Haarlem. I told her about the Dutch ancestry of Cecil B. de Mille, the well known Hollywood motion picture producer, of which he is so proud. There is a greengrocer's shop named "de Vyfhoeck" (the Pentagon) to be found on the corner of Breestraat in Haarlem, capital of the North Holland province near the North Sea coast. On the same spot in the seventeenth century stood the bakery, "de Gecroonde Vyfhoeck,"

(the Crowned Pentagon) of Antonius de Mil. This baker was one of the ancestors of Cecil B. de Mille.

On the Manhattan side of the Henry Hudson Bridge we passed the base of the sheer cliff atop of which is located "The Cloisters" in Fort Tryon Park, overlooking the broad sweep of the curving Hudson River and the New Jersey shore. The site of "The Cloisters," the buildings reconstructed from the original elements from mediaeval Europe and, in large part, the priceless collections, are the gift of John Rockefeller, Jr.

Here the Henry Hudson Parkway curves down to the river and passes under the majestic George Washington Bridge. Ahead, from the elevated express highway paralleling Riverside Drive, Rie saw on her left the heart of New York, crowded with tall buildings. On her right the Hudson River, once the heart of "New Netherland"—established, settled, and controlled, early in 1624, by the Dutch West India Company. Actually, New Netherland was a Dutch colony, extending on both sides of the river from Fort Orange, built on the present site of Albany, and extending to the Battery, where we were headed. Here were the old and the new spread before the eyes of the Dutch girl.

Rie knew from her Dutch history about the departure of the little "Haalve Maan," which set sail from the ancient "Tower of Tears" in Amsterdam on the fourth day of April, 1609. Now she was standing on the very spot where Henry Hudson left his Dutch ship to establish the first contact with the native feathered "New Yorkers"—the Indians. I told her of seeing and visiting a strange, bright-colored vessel which lay anchored off Battery Park. It was a reconstruction of the little ship "Haalve Maan" in which Hudson had braved strange seas and treacherous ice and had explored the river on which was to arise this shining city. The ship was like some strange, outlandish bird among its sober neighbors, the modern ships and swift motor launches of our day. It was a three-masted ship, the fore and main masts rigged with yards, the mizzen mast with a lateen sail and the armament consisting of four guns. The stern of the vessel rose in a steep poop and the bow was raised in a curve like a half moon, from which the ship took its name.

Lest we get our Dutch and English history mixed up—three

hundred and forty-three years ago the Dutch East India Company acquired the services of an intrepid English mariner, Hendrik Hudson, to find the coveted Northwest Passage route to China. What this English skipper on a Dutch ship actually did find was the Hudson River, appropriately named for him. In search of the Northwest Passage he sailed up the river as far as the present-day city of Albany. Thus was New Netherland discovered and claimed by the Dutch. A few years later the Dutch West India Company came into being, and in 1624 the good ship "New Netherland," carrying thirty Walloons from Holland's southern provinces, crossed the ocean, and its passengers built Fort Orange on the present site of Albany. By building Fort Nieuw Amsterdam at the Battery, the Dutch laid the foundation for what is now the world's largest city.

It was now the Dutch girl's turn to add to my knowledge of American history. I had forgotten, if I ever did know, about the Dutch connection with the Pilgrims and the "Mayflower." She told me about the bronze plaque memorial in the Pieterskirk at Leyden where her brother is in college. It was erected to the memory of John Robinson who was pastor of the English Church in Leyden from 1609–1625, and who later sailed on the "Mayflower" for the New World.

Battery Park, a tract of twenty-one acres, occupies the site of the old Dutch fortifications. Looking out over the Upper Bay on this clear day, we seemed very close to the Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island, and to Ellis Island, used by the Federal Government as a landing place for immigrants. At the entrance to the East River, I pointed out Governor's Island, half a mile south of the Battery, purchased from the Indians by the Dutchman Wouter van Twiller and for over a hundred and fifty years used as a United States Army headquarters. Downtown, in lower Manhattan, one realizes, Dutch influence is not merely a lingering one, but rather a vital, potent force in our America of today.

Here we picked up the southern end of the old twisting cowpath, that is now famous Broadway, winding through the deep financial canyons, lower Broadway, Maiden Lane and Wall Street. Maiden Lane, famous for its trade in jewels, quite

appropriately got its name from the pretty Dutch maidens who were courted here. Rie did not know Wall Street was named for the wall constructed across the Island by the Dutch burghers to protect themselves against the Indian raids nearly three hundred years ago. I have often wondered if the Dutch burgher of New Netherland who put up the "Wal Straat" sign at the corner in the seventeenth century realized he was christening the heart of the financial world.

Located at the head of Wall Street, which is hardly a half mile long, in the midst of the banks and great office buildings, stands Trinity Church and its old graveyard. Rie was fascinated by the plaque on the old church, rebuilt after the first church was destroyed during the British occupation, telling of its consecration in 1790 in the presence of President Washington. We walked through the old, hallowed Trinity burial ground upon which the tens of thousands of windows in the surrounding skyscrapers look down, and among the graves and the markers of Alexander Hamilton, Robert Fulton, and other famous men as well as those of Revolutionary soldiers who died on British prison ships.

We drove slowly up Broadway, turning off occasionally. Broadway runs diagonally north through the Island from the Battery, up to the Harlem River and beyond and changes its character a half dozen times in as many miles. We paused in the Bowery, for this section is steeped in Dutch history. Peter Stuyvesant was the last Dutch Governor of New Netherland. He was famous in Holland and somewhat infamous in the New World. His silver-banded artificial leg added to his fierce appearance and he was a dyspeptic, stubborn despot. Overwhelmed by a surprise English attack, he surrendered New Netherland to England and retired to his farm which is now the Bowery in New York. I pointed out his burial place under his chapel, now the site of the church St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, below Stuyvesant Square and 14th Street.

On east 20th Street we passed the Theodore Roosevelt Museum, the restored birthplace of the former President. Here, too, is a Dutch flavor. A curiosity in the little village of Oud-Vossemeer in Holland is the coat of arms of the Roosevelt family.

You will find it on a mantelpiece in the Village Hall. From this Dutch ancestry we have had two American Presidents.

We completed our tour of Manhattan Island along the famous East Side Highway that runs beside East River. Then, quite appropriately, we left Manhattan through the Holland Tunnel to the New Jersey side. Now the afternoon winter shadows were getting long so we hurried upriver atop the Palisades to the New Jersey end of the George Washington Bridge where we crossed back into New York. Just at sunset we drove to Connecticut on the Merritt Parkway. It was a tired Cinderella who reached Stamford after dark, and that night she wrote the following in her diary:

> Pops showed me all the high buildings and for a long time we drove past the docks—like Rotterdam. To me here was the wide open world in a crowded city. A world of travel of ships coming from far away corners and leaving for strange countries.
>
> I saw Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, Greek, and many other nationalities. In Holland you see Dutch people—that's all. Like everything strange and foreign, this was very fascinating. I was impressed by the big things, the high buildings and Central Park, beautiful even in winter; and loved New York for it.
>
> To me a popcorn stand is New York yust as much as the Chrysler Building. . . . Is it not wonderful how you can stand on Broadway and have a fruit drink in a hurry, and you yust stand outside on the street.

Important in Maria's American experience is a close friend of ours who became one of her friends, too. Clarence Clark lives in Chicago, but occasional business trips bring him to New York. When Clarence and I were young men we fished and hunted together in the wilderness of northern Minnesota and Canada north of Lake Superior, and through the years we have shared many good experiences.

More than any of our friends, Clarence was interested in my Holland project. When Rie's castles-in-the-air came tumbling

down around her head and we decided to bring her to America, some of my friends were apprehensive. But not Clarence! When he learned of Rie's dilemma, he telephoned from Chicago, urged me to go ahead, told me he would like to share the expense if I would permit.

And Clarence helped rub Aladdin's Lamp in Manhattan. He was in New York at the time, and together we planned a day with meticulous precision and the timing of a military operation by the Marines. (It's since been hinted to me that young ladies' schedules are not necessarily to be planned so rigidly.)

Rie and I took the 7:43 morning express from Stamford to New York. It was another beautiful sunny day for her adventure in Manhattan. When we came up from the train track in the western end of Grand Central the morning sun was pointing long golden light shafts through the massive east windows high above the main level. The morning sunlight pattern on the spacious marble floor in Grand Central is a sight to see.

We left Grand Central through the Vanderbilt Avenue entrance on 43rd Street, crossing Madison Avenue to Fifth Avenue where we swung briskly uptown. Rie "belonged" in the tide of commuters going to their offices in mid-Manhattan—from the jaunty feather on her hat to the tip of her well shod feet. She was smartly turned out. If you would like to see a parade of America's smartest business women, park yourself on Fifth Avenue between 48th and 52nd Streets across from Rockefeller Center on a business morning between 8:45 and 9:15. This was what Rie had wanted to see, people going to their work. And so we stopped a moment while she scanned the passing faces and tried to imagine where they would be going.

Then we went into Saint Patrick's Cathedral and the sun was pouring through the famous stained-glass windows that face east on Madison Avenue. Ahead of us was one of the world's most beautiful altars, with exquisite flowers and lighted candles ranging in size from the tall to the diminutive in gleaming holders. There were perhaps a hundred people in the cathedral, in the pews and in front of the many shrines that line the walls on both sides. Yet in this majestic, silent Cathedral we seemed almost alone and quite unimportant.

We walked past the shrines on both walls and to the shrines and tiny chapels of Our Lady behind the altar in the Madison Avenue end of the Cathedral. In front of these shrines were many candle cups, mostly lighted, each lighted candle expressing a prayer by some man or woman who is troubled or giving thanks. I am not of the Roman Catholic faith, but occasionally I go to Saint Patrick's, located three short blocks from my office. It is a quiet, peaceful, inspiring retreat. You step through the massive bronze doors off busy Fifth Avenue and sit quietly in a quiescent world.

On this occasion I was most thankful for this rich and worthwhile experience in my life. Rie will not know the thought she saw me express until she reads these words. At the shrine of Saint Anthony with its statue of the sweet, sad-faced saint holding a child, I picked up a taper and reverently lighted a candle and dropped a coin in the box for the poor—my first experience and a most satisfying one.

From Saint Patrick's we entered Rockefeller Center through the building on 52nd Street. I wanted to take Rie through the lower level shops and briskly stepped on a "down" escalator. A year later, going through Rie's diary, I found this:

> Coming from such a small Island, big and great things filled me, and Saint Patrick's was one of the most wonderful sights. After this we went to Rockefeller Center under the ground, a whole city under the ground with streets and shops and restaurants. This was too much and I had to look over and over and breathe deeply while thinking.
>
> Pops, who by now knew I can adjust myself to new ways quickly, walked fast, and when we came to an escalator did not realize I had never seen one or know what they are for. He stepped on it and I knew I was supposed to follow. With pounding heart I stepped too —the moving thing that brought us down. Always since I have a little pang of fear when I step on it—a reason to ride on them all the time of course. No dead thing should be boss over me.

We walked underground through the labyrinth of shops from 52nd Street to 48th Street and to the Avenue of the Americas, where the United States Rubber Company Building is located. Here fifteen hundred people occupy the building and my office is on the fifteenth floor. There I turned Rie over to my secretary, Miss Lois Sjursen.

Most of the folks on the 15th floor knew about Rie. Lois introduced her to everybody and then took her directly to the Export Division on another floor, to meet John Cassam, the miracle man, to thank him for arranging her passage to America. Miss Kelley and the switchboard operators wanted to meet her because of her introduction through the overseas call. Of course it was interesting for Rie to see the operation of a big, busy New York switchboard.

After the introductions in the building, Lois took her over to the RCA Building, where they joined a guided tour of Rockefeller Center. A likely way to meet folks from your home town—in New York—is to take an RCA guided tour. Rie met a Dutch lady fresh from Holland on her tour and Lois told me they spoke in Dutch, much to the interest of the party.

I am still provincial—of that I am sure—and the big city has not taken the country boy out of me. I still get a thrill and a lift from Rockefeller Center after working there for over ten years. I will never tire of the vista of Manhattan towers, rivers and busy harbor from the seventieth-floor observation roof atop the RCA Building. The lights shining through the 16,500 windows are always a pretty sight to me, and the four acres of roof-top gardens at different levels—American, English, French and Italian. It is a city in itself, with 32,000 office worker residents and a daily visitor average of 128,000 people. The total daily average of 160,000 would make it rank fifty-fifth in size of all American cities. Every little detail is handled with meticulous care. Should any one of the many office people need to retrieve a paper or anything of value that might inadvertently have found its way into a waste basket, it could be located instantly in a numbered burlap sack in a sub-basement locker—held for a period of forty-eight hours.

The Holland House in Rockefeller Center on 48th Street is

one of mid-Manhattan's unusual eating places. Dutchmen walk up and down the stairs from their Netherlands' Club on the second floor. Here are several authentic Dutch dishes, waitresses are in Dutch costume, and the menu is in Dutch and English. In our luncheon party was Miss Vera Cranz, Publicity Manager for our Division. Folks at nearby tables knew, from the attention being paid the pretty Dutch girl, that she was someone special from Holland, but they could not guess how much pleasure she was giving us.

The planning for the day included a reserved seat for the afternoon show at Radio City Music Hall. I will always be sorry I only purchased one ticket, thinking I was too busy to take the afternoon off. You should have seen her face when she told us about her afternoon in the Music Hall, over the dinner table at the Stork Club a few hours later:

> Maybe it was better I was to go alone because I saw things I never dreamed before and it needed all my attention. The movie was very good. I had never seen Jane Wyman before and liked her very much in "Stage Fright." But the flying Rockettes! Thirty girls in beautiful costume who dance and move like there was only one—so perfect. I had never seen any ballet and the Corps de Ballet, this was unbelievable.

Her face was radiant as she told Clarence and me and I will never forget her expressive hands as she tried to tell us about the Music Hall lobby, tapestry, mural paintings and their legends, the elusive lighting and deep luxury carpets. Nothing had escaped her inquiring eyes and senses. She said, "Now and again I had to touch myself sitting there—yes, it was me! Yes, it was real!" In her diary I found the following impression:

> How unreal to see the big platform with the symphony orchestra coming up from the cellar as easy as I lift a feather. How could it be! I knew this orchestra was very good—real art—and I was a lucky girl to see it.

While Rie was in the Music Hall I was working in my office a block away. During the afternoon Vera Cranz was contacting *Reader's Digest* in Pleasantville, indirectly, through an acquaintance on Fifth Avenue. Finally a call came back direct from Pleasantville, inviting Rie to be the guest of the editorial staff for luncheon in their Pleasantville offices two days hence.

Rie returned to my office at five o'clock, as the outbound tide of people was flowing down the elevators—homeward bound. "I never saw so many people in one building," she said, and she commented, "The girls seem to have walked right out of a fashion show, nice clothes, the right shoes, matching hairdo's. Their suits are lovely. In Holland, suits are just for summer when you go to church maybe. Some girls have no suit—too expensive."

Five o'clock is the dusk hour at this time of year. Rie saw a flaming sunset of reds and deep purples from my west window. The Hudson River was a blue-green ribbon separating Manhattan from the Jersey shore and it mirrored a pink and mauve reflection from the sunset colors. Looking straight ahead from my south window she saw the Empire State Building with its thousands of windows softly lighted through the afterglow. The lights were on in the Chrysler Building and the Grand Central area to the left, to the right the twinkling lights in the Times Square buildings. She was looking downtown through the heart of mid-Manhattan office buildings and theaters. You could sense and feel she was overwhelmed trying to put together the pattern of fabulous Manhattan. She was experiencing more in a day than many New York visitors ever see.

I took her to our sample room to see the gay, smart, colorful summer Kedettes. I showed her our interesting dress fabrics in ginghams and denims from our southern textile mills. I had her select materials for dresses and matching Kedettes casual shoes for her spring and summer outfits. When she was looking at the fabrics I knew she was thinking of her sisters overseas—Hannie and Aly and Tineke. She remonstrated, "But you must not do this for me, Pops, I have enough—more than I ever dreamed I would have all my life." But Pops had his way and we also

selected materials for "Hannie to sew on her sewing school for the girls."

It was now time for Clarence Clark to take over. My part of the day was about completed. We left "1230" and walked through the Plaza to Fifth Avenue. Rie stopped in front of the Prometheus Fountain and looked straight up the towering, lighted sixty-four-floor RCA Building. She said, "They could not believe this in Holland, not even in pictures—you have to see it." Then we took a taxi to the Ritz Carlton Hotel where Clarence Clark stayed in New York for many years until it was torn down this year.

In the old-fashioned, gilded Ritz elevators we were whisked up to the twelfth floor to Clarence's suite. After a little visit we were whisked down again. Every step from this point on had been carefully planned and prearranged by Clarence. Rie had no more than stepped off the elevator in the lobby when the flower shop man called her by name, hoped she was enjoying her visit to America, and at the same time pinned a beautiful gardenia on her coat. The doorman on Madison Avenue spoke to her and told the taxi driver to go to the Stork Club. Here, too, she was recognized and welcomed as the gold chain was released.

Clarence had arranged for a table in the "Cub Room." The Stork Club has been one of Clarence's favorites for many years, and he is not only a good customer, but a personal friend of its owner, Sherman Billingsley.

We were barely seated when Mr. Billingsley came in to say hello and to welcome Rie. And of course, he sent her one of his famous little packages of perfume. Rie's abundant enjoyment of things American always transmitted itself to those around her; this evening was no exception. Seeing those sparkling eyes, it did not seem unusual at all that a man who knows so many celebrities should be especially delighted with the lovely girl to whom all this was "new"; and that he would want her to have her first taste of champagne at his Club. And so Rie had that, too.

She chose her dinner with Clarence's help. "Surely," she said, "the strawberries and the asparagus could not be fresh—for it is

only winter." But they were. Then Clarence took her to the gay Music Room to hear the orchestra and watch the dancing. Time flew on fleet wings and too soon it was time to catch the midnight express. It was a tired but smiling girl I took home to Stamford, and who later recorded in her diary:

> I cannot write what it meant to go to the Stork Club. That night was like the pleasant part of a fairy-tale dream. All the food and whatever you wanted, and most of the things I never knew before and waiters behind you all the time. I tasted champagne for the first time and got my first corsage.
>
> If a boy on the Island would give you a flower you would think he was crazy—for there are many flowers in my father's garden and you pick them by the dozen. This flower was different—it was only March and I had never seen any in America, it is still winter you know. The man who pinned it on my coat acted as if I was a great lady—and from the way the flowers were arranged in his little glass house I could tell they were very expensive. I felt different this evening somehow as if suddenly I were somebody. Later in bed, I thought this was wrong because you are not any better for eating in a nice place and having good shoes and a corsage.

When Rie wrote to "Dear Unknown" in America, on May 2, 1947, she said, "But even if I am seventy years before I manage to get there, I know the first thing to do is to go to Pleasantville to try to see some of the *Reader's Digest*." And so her desire now became a reality.

Pleasantville is well named. It is indeed a pleasant little village in Westchester County, lying midway between the Hudson River and the Connecticut line, and about thirty-two miles north of Times Square. You can locate it on your road map a few miles north of the junction of the Saw Mill River Parkway and the Bronx River Parkway—where the superhighway, the Taconic State Parkway, heads into the scenic Adirondack Mountains. It

is a commuter's town, served from New York by the New York Central Railroad.

Thirty years ago, in October, 1921, the *Reader's Digest* was started by DeWitt Wallace and his wife, Lila Acheson Wallace. From a tiny spark, their idea spread into countless flashing beacon lights of the best in prose and fiction for Americans, and finally to spreading international good will all over the world. As on the Union Jack of yesteryear, the sun never sets on the *Reader's Digest* audience.

The location of Pleasantville was not an accident and did not just happen. It is the ideal location sought by the Wallaces. And if you did not know it from the masthead of the magazine, you could roam the streets of the pretty little village and not know it is the home of the *Reader's Digest*, actually located several miles outside of the town, halfway between Pleasantville and Mt. Kisco, near Chappaqua.

You would think the main building is a private home on a large country estate. It sits in a landscaped park overlooking the wooded hills as you enter on a private road off the busy highway. The spacious lawns are beautifully kept. Tall white pillars in front give it a graceful, charming, formal appearance. The furnishings are simple and exquisite. Actually, it is a home for the editorial staff offices, fully self-contained and self-sufficient with dining rooms, cafeteria and ample parking space. It is a fine place to work.

We were blessed with another beautiful day of late winter sunshine. You could feel the roots of spring stirring. The important thing about the first week of March in southern New England is the March sunlight, lengthened sunlight, almost eleven and a half hours of it between sunrise and sunset. The warmth of the tempered wind had the unmistakable touch of spring. That is the miracle of the March sun.

The drive from Stamford runs through rolling, wooded hills, crisscrossed by old New England granite stone fences. Scattered through the hills are many country homes and estates of New York businessmen who prefer gracious country living to "mad Manhattan" apartments—you might tag them Manhattan "country squires." Route 104 out of Stamford to Westchester County is

well named "Long Ridge Road." It runs atop a little spur of hills that stray down from eastern New York to Long Island Sound. Rie and I made the drive on a brisk, clear, late winter morning. Traces of snow on the north side of the stone fences meandering through the wooded, leafless hills, looked like white deerskin thongs lacing a giant snowshoe.

This morning I was mostly interested in the view of the many pretty little homes and pretentious mansions, hidden most of the year behind the foliage. But not so Rie—her world was filled with trees. Coming from the treeless island in the North Sea, a vista of wooded hills and valleys was as fascinating to her as a forest of huge cactus in Arizona would be to a visitor from Connecticut.

The telephone invitation from *Reader's Digest* had said Rie should ask for Sonja de Bray when she arrived for luncheon. I thought Sonja would be a French lady. On a graceful table in the reception room stood a Dutch plaque with the crest of the House of Orange: lions and "Je Maintendrai"—"I will persist." Was the plaque placed there because of the Dutch girl's visit? While I was holding the plaque in my hands, I looked up and saw a pretty Dutch girl enter. In Dutch she introduced herself to Rie as Sonje de Bray from The Hague. They were a pair of pretty, animated Dutch girls talking in their native tongue, and in their minds they were back home in the Netherlands.

That day, too, another of Rie's many anticipated American experiences came true. She wanted to eat in a cafeteria and *Reader's Digest* has a fine one in the Pleasantville home. The food was wonderful and we carried our trays to a table in front of huge picture windows overlooking the wooded hills laced by a concrete highway ribbon. Talent in Pleasantville? The walls of the dining room were covered with pictures—crayon, pen, and brush—a home talent exhibition for the judging of awards.

We were six at the table. I wished fervently that Bertha and Joe Leeder could have been present. The dining room was comfortably filled and I could feel the inspiration and leadership of the Wallaces and understand the power behind the magazine.

After lunch Sonja guided Rie through the editorial offices

and introduced her to many of the personnel. Most of her time was spent in the office of Hobart Lewis on the editorial staff of the International Editions, since it was in this edition that Rie's letter had been published. We were sorry the Director, Barclay Acheson, was in Europe. Hobart Lewis took us into Mr. Acheson's office. Beside one wall, on a long table, stood all the flags of the United Nations arranged in a semicircle—and in the center of the arc, standing alone, was the flag of the Netherlands—so placed as a friendly gesture to their Dutch guest.

Mrs. Wallace met Rie and told her how sorry she was that her husband was out of town. But she promised Rie she would tell Mr. Wallace about the fabulous story of the Dutch girl from the North Sea island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee. Thus did Rie have the opportunity of thanking the *Reader's Digest*.

In mid-afternoon we drove from Pleasantville, New York, to Naugatuck, Connecticut, where one of the large factories of the United States Rubber Company is located. There Rie met many of my associates and there she was fitted with the colorful Kedettes she had selected in the sample room of "1230" two days before. She was astounded by the size of the operation and interested in its history. It is here Charles Goodyear, the discoverer of the vulcanization of rubber, started the first rubber factory in America more than a hundred years ago, on the site of our present Naugatuck factories.

Then we drove home to Stamford on the Merritt Parkway, heading into a late winter sunset of great beauty. The sun had now climbed out of its deep southern path and stayed in the sky a proper time for dusk, so that six o'clock in early March came with a glow instead of lantern darkness.

TEN

Midwest Adventure

Maryland summers! On a hot, humid summer day in Baltimore in 1947, a young lady was waiting her turn in a dentist's office. From a pile of magazines on the waiting room table she selected a copy of the *Reader's Digest.* It happened to be the February 1947 issue. Turning through the colorful International Edition section in the center of this issue, she read Rie's letter. Having had a Dutch association during World War II, her interest was kindled. She wrote to Rie, and thus was a fine friendship fanned into flame.

Two weeks after Rie's arrival in America, she spent several days with this friend, Mrs. Hildebrand, in Baltimore. Of course it was the first time they had met, although they had become good friends by letter and through the boxes the Hildebrands had sent to the de Vos family during the hard 1947–1948 years.

I had taken Rie to Grand Central Station on an early morning express, planning to taxi to Penn Station with her hand luggage. She said, "Pops, can we ride the subway?" It was the height of the morning rush hour and to take the shuttle from Grand Central to Times Square and transfer to another subway train for Pennsylvania Station, with luggage, would be no mean feat. But she asked for it. From her diary:

> People do not take taxis all the time and I wanted to be like others and do the same things. Then, too, I could not find the working class people in America and

> I wanted to see if I could see them on the subway. These dark trains of many little cars are very quick and for the first moments you feel as if you cannot breathe, you are packed in so tight. But later you get used to it and I enjoyed seeing all the different people, but not working class like in Holland go to work.

The Hildebrands took Rie to Washington, D.C. for a day, where she had a chance to visit the Capitol, and see the impressive government buildings spread out before her eyes from atop the shaft of the Washington Monument. Her natural Dutch appetite for fine art was greatly excited in the National Gallery of Art, housing such a rare and beautiful collection of art treasures, including many from Holland. She said, "The Vermeer woman weighing gold in there, it made me very restful inside."

But the zenith of Rie's experiences in the nation's capital was the beautiful Lincoln Memorial, his country's most poignant and admonishing memory. After standing at the feet of Lincoln's tall spare figure, looking into his strong face, seeing the wistful expression he often wore, as if he had missed his share of happiness, she wept. She told me, "Ever since I saw him in this place the stories I heard about him in Holland, his works and words, mean so much more to me and it was like meeting a great man eye to eye. Tears were in my eyes as I read his Gettysburg Address."

It was not to strangers that Rie came when she stepped off the train in Columbus, Ohio, that morning in March, 1950. It was as one of the family that Joe and Bertha Leeder welcomed her. For the next two months the Leeders' home was Rie's home.

What did Rie think as she entered this new world in Ohio? This new environment revealed to her the treasures of the professional and academic world—a world of ideas and ideals, a world of music and the arts and sciences, in the atmosphere of a great institution, Ohio State University.

The Leeder home is situated on the outskirts of Columbus, far from the noise and dirt of the city. Its many windows look out over grassy, well-kept lawns where trees, shrubs, and flowers in artistic arrangement enhance the natural beauty of the rolling

site. Inside the house, the charm of the rooms reflects Bertha Leeder's personality. Books and pictures and fine polished antique furniture bespeak the gracious living of a home of culture. The many bedrooms, planned for the Leeder children, now married and in homes of their own, await their visits. It was one of these quiet rooms they gave to Rie.

The Leeders and their friends planned many pleasant experiences for Rie. There were teas and dinners, concerts and movies, the theater, and the music festival. She responded to them with an understanding and appreciation that amazed everyone. Never was there any inadequacy in her response. She was equal to every occasion. For all her youth she met people with a quiet dignity and poise that was a marvel to all.

The first concert she attended was presented by the London String Quartet. She said, "I recognized the Beethoven, but that Debussy I don't know. I have heard such music before by the wireless, but it is better when you see them." Her first theater was a musical comedy, "Brigadoon." She was entranced with its music and color and romantic theme. She designed and made a dress for herself like the heroine's because "I liked its looks."

She learned to speak with ease before small groups. At a meeting of Bertha Leeder's Garden Club she charmed the members with her simply expressed appreciation. She talked to groups of young people at First Community Church and addressed the Girl Scouts. Her young audiences were as enthusiastic about her as were her older friends. She read widely in English books of every kind. Poetry, prose, drama, essays, all were grist to the active mill of her mind. Her use of English became more fluent and she expressed her thoughts with discriminately used words from her rapidly enlarging vocabulary.

On Easter morning she went with my sisters, Edith, Eva, and Hazel to services in a church beautifully decorated with lilies, where a choir of a hundred voices sang the glorious Easter music:

Easter 1950

Pop's sisters took me to church on Easter morning. We went to one of Columbus' nicest churches and what

> struck you right at the entering was a big cross made of white flowers. In Holland in our Reformed Churches there are never any flowers and I always have thought the Catholics in Holland give their churches such a warmth and charm with flowers and candles. Now here, was a Protestant church with the loveliest decorations. All the time your eyes were drawn to that cross. My first Easter in the New World seemed great and light—telling me this is happy America I was in, that there always is hope as long as there is love and understanding.

After the services my sisters took her to Springfield, Ohio, to meet our cousins the Cartmells, who are in charge of the Ohio Masonic Home. As they traveled over the fifty miles to Springfield, Rie told of her life on the North Sea island. She told of their customs and how different they are from ours in America. One knew that after two months in the United States, Rie was making comparisons and finding American ways good. At the Masonic Home she looked fondly at the children and wistfully said she wished she could get a job with those children. Nothing permanent, she said, because she had to go back to Holland in the fall to care for her family. But she definitely wanted to work for an "American boss" who would require much but who would give her a recommendation to take back to Holland where "a big American boss's word means something." From her diary:

> From church Pop's sisters took me to the Masonic Home in Springfield. This is a home for the old and the sick and orphans and was my first meeting with Masons. And it sure showed me they do some good things. I met the charming couple that are Pop's cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Cartmell. He is the nicest man, with almost European manners, and an amused chuckle all the time. A humoristic man with a great love for his people.
>
> It was another new world—I did not know it could

happen in the world. We had dinner together in the main dining room with all the people of the home. A nice healthy dinner with chicken and many vegetables and salad and pie and ice cream. Never was there such a dinner on the Island. I sat and looked, figuring I would like to work there as I saw the old people and children passing by. After dinner they showed me the home, the nice hospital with the newest inventions; the big kitchen where bakers made their own cakes and food, the clean kitchens and then the gift shop where they sell what the people who live there make.

In this home they know the secret of happy living—to be useful, to accomplish something, to work. There were all kinds of needlework and I saw suddenly my old school class on the Island. How we learned to crochet, knit, embroider, sew, make patterns, buttonholes, all kinds of stitches. They showed me the looms for weaving and again I thought "how nice to be here and use all the material." The needlework teacher, seeing how interested I was, asked me to try to come back for a couple of weeks and she would teach me to weave rugs.

It was time for the service in the nice chapel. We were standing in front and saw the choir children come in dressed in special choir clothing. Some of the boys looked lonely and forlorn in their faces. One of the nurses told me about a very quiet boy that ran away twice already. They want to have an own home, and I could well understand that because of my brothers with no mother but me. After my mother died I vowed I would never let the children go to an orphanage or other home as long as I could help it. A great longing to work here and help these children came in me. I knew it was a wonderful place with such nice supervisors, and I knew lonely children can always use one more person to love them.

When we drove back to Columbus we each had a basket of candy Easter eggs in our laps from Mrs.

> Cartmell. They told me to take the baskets home to Holland in the fall and put the candy eggs in a tin box. I knew that when the Dutch kids would eat the American candy eggs I would see the little ones in the Masonic Home and warmth for all the motherless children in the world would come over me. Children that have problems, that are lonely or hungry, feel so much more than grown ups—I know.

One of Rie's early and pleasurable experiences in Ohio was earning her first American money. This she did by baby-sitting for some of the Leeders' neighbors. Her first job netted her two dollars and fifty cents. There were other jobs even more lucrative. The little pile of money grew until she had enough to spend buying things for her American friends. "You can't really give gifts with money people give you," she said. "You have to earn it yourself."

As the weeks passed, it became more and more apparent that Rie's dominant desire was to return to Holland in the fall. In vain her Columbus friends tried to dissuade her. Many cogent reasons were offered why she should stay and go on with her education—on through college if she would. She could do so much more for her family that way than by going back to the household drudgery of her island home. She could send them money, perhaps bring some of the children over here and educate them. So reasoned the Leeders and Kellers in Ohio. But to all these pleas Rie remained deaf. Her duty called her back to Holland. She must go. But, before she returned she wanted to work for an "American boss."

The Leeders had given her every opportunity to rest and relax while she was in their home. They wanted her to spend a leisurely summer, enjoying the out-of-doors and freedom from responsibility. They watched with satisfaction as each week she did release some of the tensions of the war years with their cruel experiences.

Spring delayed long in 1950 in Ohio, but at last it came as April was drawing to a close. Fruit trees blossomed; the trees were filled with birds; early flowers spread their leaves and

unfolded their buds. Now is the time, thought Rie's friends, for her to enjoy a vacation.

But Rie knew what she had to do. It was to make each day count, for time was running swiftly and before she realized it, summer would be gone and she must go, too—back to the children who looked for her return. We knew in another way, too, how close the family ties were, for Rie's father had written:

(Translated from Dutch to English)

DEAR MR. KELLER:

Very long I was planning to write you but as I do not speak English it was hard. But I feel a great urge to thank you for everything you did for all of us and specially for Rie. I love my children and have a great interest for all that concerns them.

Rie is the oldest and very near to me. After my wife died she looked after the big family in a splendid way and has taken many troubles away from me. I appreciate it very much that you helped her so much and are still doing all these things. Indeed you are a second father to her.

I also thank you for your writing to Hannie and Aly. They are cute, brave girls. In their heavy task to look after our family they stay cheerful and lively. And they get so much pleasure from the letters and things coming from America. In this way they learn more about the world and get interests in things that are not in their direct vicinity. It is a pleasure to see how they develop and you help this growing by your kindness and interest.

Thanks for all you do. My best wishes for you and your family and good business!

Sincerely, your friend
ABRAHAM DE VOS

DEAR MRS. KELLER:

You, too, I want to thank personally for all you did

for us and Rie. You as a woman probably understood her when she went to America, after her first great disappointments. I tried to do what I could but a woman can comfort better and has more tact. She is very independent but in such cases a mother is necessary.

You have been like a mother. Too bad I cannot write in English but be convinced of my gratefulness. I will never forget it. God bless you.

Many greetings
A. DE VOS

Finally the Leeders and my sisters acquiesced. I had promised to help her get a job with a "big boss" in the East. So the Ohio folks finally agreed that what was to be must be.

Perhaps more important than our impressions of Rie were her impressions and emotions about America and particularly of her Ohio adventure. So let's go back and see it through her eyes and heart:

In the first week I had my first night train ride—to Baltimore and then to Columbus. It was a beautiful train like silver and was called a reserved coach train—"Jeffersonian." I did not sleep as we went through the mountains to Pittsburgh. The excitement of spending all night on a train was too much. There was a nice ladies' room where you could wash and comb and make up. I asked the porter to call me in time, but was very nervous in the morning as I knew the train was going beyond Columbus to St. Louis and I nearly was out of the train at a town called Newark an hour too early—but the porter called me back. Americans are very kind to strangers and it is a pleasure to start out on unknown ways.

All night I was thinking how for two years the family of the music professor had helped us through the difficult years after the war. When the first box

came it was like part of a fairy tale. We ten war children, who not even remembered how a good piece of cloth looks, we thought it could not be true.

Now more than three years ago, we still know what came out of that first box. The black fur coat, gloves, a woolen jacket and many other beautiful and useful clothes. More than once our American friends had assured us that to give was as great a pleasure as to receive. But it is a different pleasure. How could they know the joy we had for days trying on clothes, rechanging and ironing them—the joy of seeing the children in nice clothes, warm clothes—that I was not going to walk around in too short, too tight stuff—the joy of knowing strangers were so good to us. It was wonderful. And now I would meet them!

At last I was there, and I looked and looked. There was Janet, crying and looking very nice and kind, my American sister. And behind her—her parents. I felt their love and willingness to take me up. It was the beginning of coming to rest in a happy home.

In the car they told me Pop's sisters were coming for breakfast—a very amazing fact to me—in Holland you never ask people for breakfast. We entered a big kitchen, perfectly planned. On the dining room table was the nice silver and in the fruit dishes were figs—I only remember that, when I was about ten, I sometimes saved my weekly penny for half an ounce of dried figs.

Very soon Pop's sisters entered. The breakfast was a real big party and much excitement. I noticed Mother Leeder was quiet—she is a person that thinks first and it is an honor for me to be taken in her family and to be trusted and loved by her. After Pop's three sisters left they showed me the house. It is a lovely one you want to have for life. And then my room. A very big room with a place to write and sit, too, and three windows to look out on the quiet Ohio nights. In the room was a real radio—a new white one—sent to me

from Pops. I did not know about it. Imagine that—giving me a radio in my own room.

There were many flowers in the yard and garden—even some Dutch flowers from bulbs Dad sent—and every morning new miracles. Never before was a spring so promising. In the war when things became worse and worse, spring was always good. Maybe we would get a hot summer, maybe we would not need a stove for months. Maybe next winter the Germans were gone and maybe this summer we would have more potatoes and then we could save food or hide it for next winter. Maybe! That was our only hope. And even after the war and the troubles were so mountain high that we could not be very hopeful.

Today no meat, tomorrow no shoes, people still dying, no paint for the house that had contained the North Sea water for more than a year. No blankets—no real peace. Everywhere small and big wars, everywhere disappointed people, and every spring a new "maybe."

But this spring in Ohio was different. I know it was just me, my tired brains got a rest at last—I knew nothing had really changed. But the Leeders in the big white house gave me what long war years had taken away from young people in Europe—faith. And with faith life is worth living—not only because you have to help others to struggle, not only because there are nine brothers and sisters that need your care, not only because there was nobody else to repair, change, cook and fend against the Germans, but because with enough faith you want to live, just for the sake of living. I know if God really looks after us, He will give back to the Leeders what they did for me spring 1950.

London String Quartet: How nice it is to go out once in a while. On the Island in Holland in winter our evenings out were limited to Church Club and Gymnastic Club. Here in America everybody seems to

think it a necessity to go out to a movie or dance or concert at least once a week.

The Leeders took me to a concert with the London String Quartet in Columbus. It was fun to dress up and I felt good when we entered and so many people greeted father Leeder.

All I saw was new. It was my first concert. When the four men in black came on the stage my heart pounded. So this is what you read about, hear about, think about—people going to play for your enjoyment. I tried to recognize the instruments—looked at the program—and here they started.

I love Beethoven and recognized many parts I had heard on the radio. In my village of Goltgensplaat there are no phonografs or records except the gymnastic leaders'—on which we do our exercises. This, my first concert, was the beginning of a new chapter in my life—that of liking music and feeling a joy and recovery through it.

Brigadoon: Amongst my nicest memories is a visit to "Brigadoon." After a very nice luncheon at a fine restaurant, Pop's sister Eva took me to the play. This was my first theatre and I felt a spell of suspense before the curtain rises. What is coming? It was out of this world—too much to take in at once. All through the musical play I sat under a spell, my eyes from one to the other point. There were many beautiful girls, with the prettiest long dresses, all plaids and checks and gay colors.

There was the beautiful music and the plot of the play itself. And how I could understand and appreciate the attitude of the two American boys—seeing Europe—because I know the difference. How I laughed when the American girl at the bar came to talk with the boy that left his heart in Scotland. It struck me that there was such a healthy sense of humor in it—even a little joking about our own European national

shortcomings and habits. I was under a spell and had trouble to be common again in the outside world the first hours.

I feel lucky and think about my Island friends who never see a thing like this. All that we go through and see and read leaves an impression. It is like a sculptor making a statue from a stone. We start out being blank and get marks and shapes—till a finished pattern. I do not think the pattern is finished before the day we die, and until then we can do our part in shaping ourselves and others. I felt after "Brigadoon" how I got a present, and how I became richer with what I saw. And never will I forget the people that made all this possible for me.

The dresses in "Brigadoon" were all made on the same base—a tight, rather long bodice with a square neckline and a long full skirt. I thought the idea was good and very becoming. So one day I got out a piece of woolen material, given to me by two lovely girls, who thought I might get a skirt out of it.

These girls were neighbors of Pop's sisters, and had one evening shown me all their clothes. It was amazing—one girl had nine skirts—just summer skirts. And all the dresses, shoes, bags, blouses, hats, and sweaters. I did not feel jealous as it seemed to me it must be an awful job to keep it all in order and more awful to decide what you are going to wear. It must be just like the long menus, when I always wonder what to take.

These girls sewed and had many nice pieces of material. So they gave me some—which seemed very strange to me as they never met me before and I had not done anything for them. Once again I felt the kindness American people can have for a stranger.

I sat down on the floor of my nice big room in Columbus, trying to get a dress out of one yard of wide woolen material. It was soft purple, woven of thick threads to give it a linen idea, with pink and green stripes, all very useful. I had to match the stripes too.

> Altho it seemed impossible, I wanted a dress. I made a pattern and tried to put it on in many ways. At last I got a skirt gathered at the waist from the piece. Then from the leftovers I cut short sleeves. I had to cut the body on the bias with a seam in the front, but amazingly enough, that made the dress look very good. I wore the dress on Easter.

The Leeders and other Ohio State University faculty members are active in the church and garden groups. It was here Rie was first able to piece together the pattern of another segment of America. The Garden Club had sent a "Care" package of Christmas food to the North Sea island the previous Christmas, and the "Young Peoples' Group" in the church knew about the de Vos family through the Leeders' interest. All were anxious to meet the Dutch girl and learn of her family, home life, and the customs of her island. So she met, mingled, and talked to them with the greatest of ease. She also addressed a Girl Scout group. From her diary:

> One of the mothers on the hill where the Leeders live asked me to talk to the Girl Scouts. I was afraid and embarrassed as I had never talked to any group before and maybe I could not do it. The meeting was in a school. When I saw the bunch of little girls—freckled and tanned, my fear left me. We all sat on the low desks and sang carols. They asked many questions about my sisters—it was the main conversation. Do they go to school? What grade? Do they wear wooden shoes? Do they have cycles? Do they go to Sunday school? Of course I liked to talk about my sisters, as they sure were in my head, and it is good to talk about people at home when you are so far away.
>
> After it was over I felt surprised and relieved that I made it. They asked me to join their program. Half a year later they sent my little sister Tineke the nicest handbag. Was that not nice?

When the First Community Church people asked me to talk to the teenagers, I said I would try. It was Sunday afternoon and when the big group of boys and girls came in, chattering and giggling and looking at me, I was scared good. But like they say in Holland—"you are in the boat so you have to row."

When I started I did not look at them much. I told them about the teenagers in the war—how some of them did underground work for the Allied soldiers. How many of them had no shoes and now not enough clothes and had to take turns going to school. How the Germans picked strong boys of fifteen and sixteen and took them to work in Germany. And when I said the wrong words in the wrong place and said "goot" instead of good, nobody laughed. When I finished they gave me some good long cheers, which made me very happy.

Most interesting of all the groups in the church was the Young Peoples' Club—mostly students of Ohio State University. I was invited, and coming in the church again that evening I found many nice young people. Among them were many foreigners including an Egyptian, an Arabian, a boy from Pakistan and one from Turkey—all from the University.

They talked each in turn, there were many questions and long debates. The boy from Pakistan, which is in India, specially drew my attention as he was very honest and outspoken. He talked about his country and how his people are still ignorant and very poverty. He told us how they lived poorly in the Indus valley and the Ganges delta and the mountain passes into Afghanistan.

But mostly the Pakistan boy talked about the two sides he called American Capital and Communist. He explained how the United States will help his poor people and how they need machinery and factories. He scared me when he talked about Communist because I know how they work in Europe, too.

He told how the Communists tell his poor hungry people that America tries to buy them with money—and how easy it is to persuade and convince his people. It was more real to me than the Americans in the group. He did not call white black nor black white, and I believe his talk has opened the eyes of some of the people for the needs of his people against Communists.

I wanted to tell the Pakistan boy how I liked his frank speech and how I understood the terrible Communist threat—and of course this cost me a lot as I just had a hard time to go and be impulsive. But I did, took his hand and told him how good he spoke—and after that I felt so good. Again America had done something for me—had untied some of the bands of my upbringing—the way the Island thinks you should act—not ever showing love or admiration or gratefulness too much.

Joe Leeder and Edith Keller are always interested and active in the spring music festivals. Many of Joe's music graduates are teaching in Ohio schools and Edith is State Supervisor of Music in Ohio's public school system. So Joe took Rie to several festivals in central Ohio. From her diary:

One sunny morning we drove about fifty miles to a highschool. During the afternoon for rehearsals I got a seat near the children and studied the whole course. The teenagers, mostly juniors, looked like kids of twenty to me and I was very surprised to find they were around fourteen and sixteen. The girls with their permanents and makeup, their nice clothes and already developed figures made them look much older, I thought. I had a vision of my fourteen-year-old sister Hannie, with her kneelength dresses and straight hair with a ribbon in it. When I looked at all the pretty American girls, with so much better taste than Dutch girls in dressing and grooming, I felt rather inferior and wondered about my sisters Hannie, Aly, and Tineke.

After the rehearsals it was dinner time and we went down to the school lunchroom where the girls of the school were serving as waitresses. The meal was plain but good. When we were eating, the schoolteachers around me had a gay conversation and joined me in.

The evening was a success. The children sang "Little David," "Marquita," "Kentucky Babe," and the best song was "Bless this House" and was sung by everybody. It was deeply moving and a crown on the festival. Besides the singing was a band. How I wish our Dutch highschools could have an instrument and so learn the fundaments of music—a base for later studies.

Once, on the Island, they tried to start music lessons, not with any instruments, as that is too costly, but with an instructor who played himself only and told them many things. But the lessons had to stop as most people could not pay the ten guilders a year for the teacher.

When we came home we had what you call a snack with ice cream. I cannot get used to ice cream in the winter—spring—but I like it very much. On my island in the big village of Middleharnis they have ice cream only in July and August and in my village only on Saturdays. How rich are Americans.

ELEVEN

Chicago Visit and a Dilemma

During the Lenten season I was having lunch with Clarence Clark in Chicago. We were talking about Rie, and decided our protégé should see Chicago and also visit my daughter, Mary Lovdahl, in Appleton, Wisconsin. Rie had never experienced pullman travel so we sent her a round-trip rail and bedroom reservation on the Pennsylvania's overnight "Ohioan," running between Columbus and Chicago.

Two weeks after Easter, Clarence met Rie at Chicago's Union Station. She was excited on her arrival in Chicago and as Clarence drove her to the Lake Shore Club on the Outer Drive, she breathlessly told him:

> Last night I found myself in what you call a duplex apartment—with a whole little bedroom all for myself, a nice bed, a washstand, toilet and closet space. Just imagine you go to bed on a train like you do at home. The only thing that worried me was whether the porter would wake me up in time.
>
> At 6 o'clock I was clear awake wondering why he did not call me. At 6:30 I was pacing the floor—maybe we had passed Chicago and he had forgotten all about me. It got worse and worse, and at last with pounding heart I opened my door. There was the kindly black man sitting on my duplex steps, reading his paper. "Why did you not call me," I asked. "We had an acci-

dent and the train stopped for two hours—we will be two hours late in Chicago," he said, as he fixed my bed into a couch. These Americans are amazing.

Clarence had arranged a parlor-bedroom suite overlooking Lake Michigan, even arranging for a television in her parlor. As soon as her bags had been sent up to her rooms, he drove her to the Chicago Institute of Art on Michigan Avenue. It is her love for Dutch paintings that made the Art Institute the number one on her list of Chicago experiences. There was a special exhibit of the paintings of the Dutch master, Van Gogh, and, telling about it, she said, "The very good exhibition of Van Gogh made me see again how practical Americans are. A man gave us a lesson in the room with the paintings, illustrating with color schemes, and showed us how Van Gogh was influenced by the places where he lived. How gay his colors were in France and how dark in Holland. It is so different from Holland and so typical of Americans to do a thing like that for the public."

In the evening Clarence drove her along the curving Lake Shore Drive North. The drive at night is a fairyland of lights. On the left the tall hotels and apartment houses of the famed "Gold Coast" and on the right the vast lake. Coming from the North Sea, she said to Clarence, "How peaceful the dark water which gives me a peace and fulfillment and quiets my restlessness."

On the second morning Dorothy's Uncle Lee Atwood joined them. After a leisurely breakfast Clarence drove to his west side factory while Uncle Lee took over. Next on Rie's Chicago schedule was Marshall Fields'. Here the many things she had read about and dreamed about came true right before her bewildered eyes, as they moved on the broad escalators from floor to floor. "No Dutch young people could imagine what is here—they could not believe it. I wonder how I can tell my sister Hannie how utterly different it is from Holland."

Clarence joined them about noon, at the perfume counter, by prearrangement. Rie wanted to see more of Marshall Fields', so they spent the noon hour in the silverware, chinaware, jew-

elry, and book departments. Then they went to the Imperial House on the Near North Side for lunch.

On the way to the North Western Station they picked up her bags at the Lake Shore Club. She was leaving at 4:10 P.M. on North Western's sleek, canary-yellow streamliner "Peninsula 400," to go through Milwaukee and the Fox River Valley to Appleton, Wisconsin. As they turned her over to the Pullman porter, Clarence handed her a current best-seller, *The Cardinal*, to read, and Uncle Lee gave her a box of candy. In her excitement she kissed Uncle Lee lightly on the cheek—just a peck. Horrors! She had left a trace of lipstick! She was flustered, her face crimson, and in her confusion pointed her finger to his cheek, much to the enjoyment of the folks standing by the club car entrance. Thus did she travel to Appleton; and on this trip she had her first experience in a dining car.

Three hundred and seventeen years ago, the French explorer, Jean Nicolet, in search of a Northwest Passage to China, steered his birch-bark canoe into Lake Michigan's Green Bay and pushed on into the Fox River. About thirty miles upstream he passed the present site of Appleton. This is one of the oldest civilized sections in America, for the main route of exploration and early trade was through the Fox River Valley. Appleton is the home of Lawrence College and the hub of the country's paper-making industry.

It was to spend a few days with our daughter, Mary Keller Lovdahl, that Rie went to Appleton. Mary's husband, Harold, is associated with Lawrence College there. A native of Wisconsin, Harold made the Lawrence College connection after a long stint in the Navy during World War II. He courted Mary in Connecticut and Maryland while she was training in the Cadet Nurse Corps. Mary completed her course at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore during May, 1948, and she and Harold were married in Stamford, Connecticut, a month later, going directly to Appleton for their honeymoon and home.

On a Sunday late in April I stopped in Appleton on my way to Minneapolis. Greatest attraction, I must confess, was my ten-months-old granddaughter, Ann Louise Lovdahl. I also had an opportunity to talk to Rie about plans for the summer

just ahead. I found Mary, Harold, and Rie all in a state of animated excitement and happiness. Lawrence College folks were delighted and charmed with the Dutch girl and still another new world was opened to her. Mary and Harold live in a little house on the campus, in the shadow of the college library. Here Maria found herself in the center of college activities and here she rubbed elbows with typical American co-eds. A few notes from her diary:

> It was dark when the train arrived in Appleton. As the train slowly pulled in my heart pounded faster. On the already dark station a young girl with blond hair was waiting. I knew Mary right away. She was all excited and happy to see me. As we were waiting for a taxi she told me about the baby Ann Louise, and Harold her Norwegian husband. The next morning I woke up by the little noises of Ann Louise, and got up to see her. She was the cutest baby, with big blue inquiring eyes and the most straight little figure you ever saw, holding herself like a Dior mannequin. After looking me over she took me in her family and let me hold her and feed her. It was a happy time.
>
> At last Sunday came and Pops came, with everybody excited. Ann Louise had to be dressed up and the house had to be real neat. This time Mary did not let me help her with the cooking. She wanted to make dinner herself and when Pops came with a taxi she had things planned.
>
> Pops was the same—always understanding and helpful. I told him about my wonderful home in Columbus and plans they had for me to rest all summer and to go to school in the fall for a career in America. I also told him I felt I must go home in October and I would like to work for a boss and earn money like other people do. I want to prove myself that I can do it with other working people and learn all I can about America because I may never get back. . . .
>
> Pops listened without interrupting. Then he said,

> "I will get you a summer job with a boss but I do not know where. It may be hard to explain things to my sisters and the Leeders, but I will spend some days thinking and when I see you in Columbus in a week I will know what you should do." That night when Pops left for Minneapolis, I felt peaceful and sure I would have a working job with a real boss.

Rie is deeply attached to Holland. This I knew from our overseas conversation and her letters from England before she sailed. Her conversation with Hobart Lewis of *Reader's Digest* revealed to me the depth and scope of her attachment. Her role of motherhood for her nine brothers and sisters was uppermost in her mind.

Then, too, this trusting and gentle girl had been dealt a terrible blow to her heart and pride. While I felt sure her Dutch philosophy and shrewdness would come to her rescue and mend the broken heart, I was also sure her family ties would take her back to Holland. Yet the Leeders and my sisters and most of our friends, except Clarence Clark, could not accept her return as the right thing for her to do. Thus the dilemma with two sharp horns: (a) Fine, sound plans on the part of the Leeders and my sisters for Rie's future, which eventually would mean American citizenship and an American career and no return to Holland in the foreseeable future; (b) Rie's feverish desire to get a summer job in America before returning to Holland in October.

Letters from the Leeders and my sisters were urgent. Could I not do something? They pointed out it would be a mistake for her to pass up this great opportunity to go to college by giving up her immigration visa and opportunity for citizenship. Had she not made her full contribution to the welfare of her father, brothers, and sisters? My sister Edith suggested I write to Rie's father and explain the situation. Rie could live in the lovely home of the Leeders. They had such lovely plans for her. They planned to jointly underwrite the expense of a course of study to start in the fall. But there was only silence from me. How could I make them understand? Time was running out. It was

this subject I talked with Rie about in Appleton, and it was there I decided to "take the bull by the horns."

I went on to Minneapolis and back to Chicago where I talked the problem over with Clarence Clark. Looking at the matter realistically it was decided I should take Rie to Connecticut with me when I returned within a few days. Rather a drastic and ruthless decision to make without consulting the Columbus folks, but I decided to hew to the line of the decision Rie had made, without further trying to dissuade her.

A few days later I flew from Detroit to Columbus—late Friday afternoon. My sisters Edith, Eva, and Hazel met me at the airport. First thing in the car as we started home, I told them I wondered just how welcome I would be on this Columbus stop, with tickets in my pocket to take Rie to New York the following day. As expected, they were startled and astonished, and it was decided we should drive directly to the home of Joe and Bertha Leeder. There the six of us talked calmly and realistically and it was then they acquiesced and agreed that what was to be must be.

The next day Bertha Leeder took Rie downtown and outfitted her with a gay spring wardrobe and, late on the afternoon of May 6th, her Columbus friends went with her to the station and watched her board the train for her next adventure.

The "Ohio State Limited" was running late the next morning—a perfectly beautiful Sunday morning in early May. We had breakfast around Albany and the ride down the Hudson was delightful. We sat in the club car, facing the river. I kept her talking about her life on the North Sea island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee. Gradually I was piecing together the pattern of her mind and thinking. Dorothy and I were not suggesting or advising. We were not sure that her thinking was practical or realistic, but we felt time would take care of that. We fully expected she would return to Holland in October, but we hoped that would not be the end of her adventure and opportunity in America, and honestly did not think so. But Dorothy and I had a solemn pact that we would not influence her—she must make up her own mind.

We arrived home in Stamford about noon. In the afternoon

we drove over to the beach at Old Greenwich. In her diary for this Sunday I found the following:

> This afternoon we were in the car and Pops said to Nannie, "I do not want a good humor today." I wondered why—who does not want a good humor. Then Nannie said maybe Rie would like a good humor and I did not know what they were talking about. So Pops changed his mind and we all had good humors.
>
> A good humor is a certain kind of ice cream, yes—and the bell of the good humor man means much to American children and also to grown ups—that is why I love Americans—because they are never ashamed of being children. We are all, at heart, but how hard tries the Englishman to hide it, and how desperately tries a Dutchman from my Island to act grown-up and sensible, which is unnatural.
>
> Another thing that amazes me are the many antique shops in houses in Connecticut. They sell grandma's kitchen chairs for antiques—and our salt dish (the blue pottery) was in the museum.

TWELVE

Job Hunting

Certain friends in strategic locations in the East were asked for suggestions about a temporary summer job for Rie in New York, Stamford, or in Boston. We soon learned that a suitable temporary job, in this instance, would be more difficult to locate than a permanent one. It was decided to try the area around New York first. Meanwhile, good friends in Boston were inquiring through local sources about placement with college girl groups in summer resorts or camps.

The headquarters for this activity were established in the Rockefeller Center building of the United States Rubber Company. Here Rie's schedules were planned by Jim Moonan, Manager of Sales Training, and Eva Sisson, in charge of female personnel, both with many years of business experience and a wide personal acquaintance in the New York City employment field.

The dragnet in Manhattan was thrown from one end of the Island to the other. Contacts were made and appointments were arranged for with employment agencies, business schools, foreign language schools, The Netherlands Club, Netherlands Trade Commission, Dutch Chamber of Commerce, Holland-America Steamship Lines, Royal Dutch Air Lines, and other Dutch business and professional channels. Thus Rie crisscrossed Manhattan Island by subway, bus, and on foot.

From her diary we learned her own impressions of these activities:

That Sunday in Stamford we went all over the help wanted and opportunity sections of the New York papers. I was both excited and uncertain—at last I was on the point I had wanted to arrive so badly. A boss, a job, work, meeting other people—proving myself. Yes—proving myself I could do just as well as others—but I was scared too.

I might not succeed, maybe not find a job, maybe fail in the job. Going to bed with my apples and books, I saw all kinds of things happen—waitress in a summer resort place and dropping a whole pile of plates—being in an office and sending wrong letters to important persons—being in the fashion dressmaking business and cut an expensive dress wrongly.

Monday morning came and Pops and I went to New York together. I was surprised—the schedule was all made up while Pops was away—by Mr. Moonan. He picked out the agents and personnel people for U.S. Rubber. He was so kind and interested I forgot all about my afraid feeling and I just started to feel more relaxed and get more courage.

He sent me to see Miss Sisson in the Personnel Department. I have met many business women in New York, but of all the career women Miss Sisson is the finest. . . . I liked to sit in her outer office and look at her help—about five pretty girls with wonderful clothes and shoes and make-up. When I was let in her office, here she was with deep brown eyes, dark like velvet, gray-white hair that was done up very well and plain, and a sensitive, intelligent face. She was very pretty in her navy dress.

She asked me many things and decided I should not have the aptitude test. With me not being American I would have much more trouble with questions and answers which she said would be bad for my morale. She sent me to a friend in a big agency just for experience. There I filled in an application. On the back of the sheet were listed about forty jobs. Then I saw

> how many I could not do, like accounting machine, calculator, comptometer, or a switchboard. I had no marks or experience in these things. In the afternoon my experience continued by going to Miss Sisson's friends in a school for typing, shorthand, and speech lessons. Then followed five days of seeing people for jobs.

Between times Rie was also expanding her circle of acquaintances and friends at U.S. Rubber. She made friends from the executive offices on the twentieth floor down to street level where the display windows were filled with many of the Company's products. At lunch or later in the afternoon before leaving for Stamford, I could most always find her in the sales room where products manufactured by the Company are available to employees. Naturally Rie always thought of her little brothers and sisters, and so the greatest attraction for her was the variety of materials from our southern textile mills. She selected gay ginghams and denims, and dresses and skirts and slacks and shirts in all sorts of patterns and sizes emerged from the work of her busy fingers. We were always charmed with the things Rie made, for each piece was fashioned with so much thought and care to suit the personality of the wearer for whom it was intended.

Sometimes she would talk to me about "this thing you call opportunity and democracy in American business." I gave her copies of our monthly magazine and pamphlets about the various divisions of our Company. She was most absorbed and interested during a visit to the Connecticut footwear plant, where five thousand people keep the wheels of industry turning.

One of Rie's first observations about American business democracy was meeting and watching Frank Patraglia, bootblack to U.S. Rubber executives since 1912. She saw that Frank was always welcome in private offices regardless of the pressure of business or who might be present in a conference or meeting. I told her Frank started when he was a young Italian immigrant boy from Naples. She was amazed when she was told Frank

had been "part" of the building lease with the Rockefeller interests, when the Company moved from 1790 Broadway to its present location in 1940.

And so gradually Rie learned some of the answers to the questions that had so perplexed her, about the people in America who go to work.

Then, all of a sudden, Miss Sisson in conjunction with the Netherlands Trade Commission turned up a red-hot lead. Rie was to go to Philadelphia to interview a gentleman at the Holland Fair, which was just getting underway at Gimbel Brothers Department Store there. Thus did Mr. Henry Fischer of the Netherlands Trade Commission become Rie's first boss in America during the six weeks run of the Holland Fair. Truth is stranger than fiction or fairy tales. One has to stretch the imagination to the utmost to picture the fabulous setting of her first job in America.

During 1949 Mr. Arthur C. Kaufmann and two of his associates spent several months in Holland. Mr. Kaufmann is the executive head of Gimbel Brothers, Philadelphia, as well as Chairman of the Board of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. He was responsible for bringing the Holland Fair to America in May 1950. Through this experience Rie's knowledge and understanding of American business democracy was further expanded.

Her letters were filled with excitement. She was proud of her Dutch heritage and her people. She sent pictures and clippings to amplify what she found so difficult to express in words. To understand the setting, one must know the motivation and objective of the Holland Fair.

The motivation of the Holland Fair was to introduce Dutch goods to the American consumer. American dollar self-sufficiency was vital for Netherlanders to carry on normal trade with the United States. At the same time, it was thought desirable to bring the culture and achievements of Holland to the United States. This would bring the cultural and political contribution of the Old World country to the New World with the idea of promoting a better understanding between two nations.

The Fair was a "first" for Holland, setting a precedent to other nations, showing the whole world how a small nation can achieve greatness through resourcefulness and integrity. The Netherlands government and business leaders set up a plan of selection and operation with Mr. Kaufmann.

The objective of the Holland Fair was to provide a concrete advance toward the goal of world peace by increasing the flow of world trade and international friendship. It was intended generally to augment the good relations of the United States with other nations. It was designed to assist the program of the Economic Cooperation Administration by demonstrating its results to the United States taxpayers.

Gimbel Brothers devoted over thirty thousand square feet of space in their store. In addition there were display areas throughout the entire store as well as fifty windows telling the story of Holland, its production, and its culture. The exhibits arrived in Philadelphia on the new Holland-America Lines motorship "Noordam." They were divided into three categories—Commercial, Cultural, Tourist. Total attendance at the Fair was 350,000.

Commercial products ranged from tulip bulbs to cheese. They covered the entire scope of industrial and agricultural products. In addition to the famous Dutch tulip bulbs and cheeses, there were wares such as modern furniture, fine china, glass, and a complete array of other household items. There were more than a dozen varieties of cheese, many of which were entirely new in flavor to the United States. There were chocolates, confections, meat products, and canned smoked fish. There was a Dutch shoemaker to carve wooden shoes for the delight of the children. Diamond cutters demonstrated the delicate craft for which the Dutch are so highly esteemed.

Modern Dutch art was presented in a collection of 150 paintings by recognized artists, which could be bought at moderate prices. Holland's Ministry of Art selected a representative collection of the country's best decorative wares which included ceramics, glass, silver, enamel, and hand embroidery. All items in the Arts and Crafts exhibit, including diamonds and gold

and silver jewelry on display, were offered for sale at the close of the Holland Fair. The priceless gold tea service of the Queen of the House of Orange was on display.

Illustrating Holland's cultural heritage, the Holland Fair offered an exhibit of its most famous art treasures. There were works by such artists as Rembrandt van Rijn, Frans Hals, Jan Steen, Van Goyen, Van Ostage and Jacob Van Ruysdael, some of them never before seen in this country.

Of particular interest to Americans, the cultural section included treaties and letters between Holland and the United States, signed by William Penn, Peter Stuyvesant, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt. There were some of the earliest hand-colored maps of Philadelphia, and the original letter pertaining to the purchase of Manhattan Island by the Dutch from the Indians.

The most exciting event of the Holland Fair for the Dutch girl was the special trip made by His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands for the preview and opening. This was the occasion of a banquet for six hundred guests at Gimbel Brothers Auditorium. Prince Bernhard shared the honor of the occasion with Mr. Arthur C. Kaufmann. Excerpts from the principal address made by Mr. Paul G. Hoffman, Administrator of the Economic Cooperation Administration, explain the cooperation of the United States and Dutch governments and Gimbel Brothers of Philadelphia.

"We at ECA, of course, are pleased with the Fair. It is concrete justification of our faith in the program. . . .

"Here at Gimbels you see a fine example of enlightened business statesmanship. Gimbels has worked at the Fair without stint.

". . . It has cost Gimbels a great deal of money in addition to that spent by the Dutch government. Gimbels will take no profit from Dutch merchandise sold at the Fair . . . and will incur whatever expense necessary. . . .

"This Fair supports my contention . . . that the free nations of the world can do business as equals, on a self-supporting basis. This is vitally important because I believe our relations with the

world will never be on a sound, secure basis, until they are on a business basis.

"Every move in that direction brings us closer to peace. . . . The Holland Fair is as much a blow at the Communist determination to dominate the world as the delivery of guns and ammunition to Europe."

And here was the Dutch girl from the North Sea Island, living every day with many priceless paintings of the old Dutch Masters, proudly telling the Americans about her beloved Holland. In her diary—

> After a few days I began to find my work more easy. I wanted to know enough about the art treasures, and be sure, so I went often to the big public library and read all about the Masters who had pictures there. A few times I saw the same person come back more often than once which made me want to change my talks and be sure. There was a beautiful, very simple Madonna that every day I took in my hands to show it and felt a rest and happy feeling over me. Finally it became part of myself and it never occurred to me that there would be a day when the Fair closed when I felt empty and miserable—but that day came.
>
> Most of all I love the beautiful paintings of Rembrandt. I never dreamed I could see them every day and they became more alive and real every tour. People do not really see Rembrandt's soul by looking once or twice. Americans miss the secret of Dutch light he painted in front of his people and behind them where you cannot even see it but you feel it. It is a different light in Holland below sea level and the higher North Sea does something to what you see. I know but I cannot explain what it is now that I live in different light.
>
> Nice things happened to me—like once the boss stopped me on the stairs and told me I did a good job. And then there was a time I led a women's YWCA group around. They were interested and talked a lot

and asked a lot of questions. Later I got a very nice letter telling me how much they appreciated my tour.

Rie's letters revealed her intense interest in her work and appreciation for her unusual opportunity. She had spent most of her time during her infrequent visits to the mainland of Holland in the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam, the Rijks Museum in Amsterdam, and Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem. You will remember she spent much of her time in Chicago in the Institute of Art and she visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Dutch children of all classes are taught the appreciation of fine art at an early age. And why not?—two of the greatest of all Hollanders are Rembrandt and Frans Hals—masters of all masters with brush and canvas.

Rie's salary of forty-five dollars a week was somewhat beyond her comprehension. She still translated American dollars into Dutch guilders in her mind. Forty-five dollars times four guilders equals 180 guilders a week. No one in her village of Ooltgensplaat ever dreamed of making that many guilders any week, anywhere. She had operated a home for eleven people in Holland on 50 guilders a week. She was rich! She was also thrifty!

At first Rie stayed at one of the smaller hotels with the Dutch group brought over from Holland. After a few days she moved to the YWCA with a motherly Dutch woman. "Much cheaper at the YWCA," said Rie. She loved the Horn and Hardart Automats where she could save substantially on her breakfasts and luncheons—"Cheaper and more interesting," she said. She had plenty of clothes, so she just saved. It would be hard to believe how many dollars (multiplied by four guilders in her thinking) she brought home to Stamford to add to her growing savings account.

Rie was not a stranger to Rotterdam, but always her visits there had been made during the day. Now she was in a city far larger than Rotterdam, a beautiful city of strange but friendly folks—on her own, making her own way, "working for a boss." She missed her out-of-doors activities, particularly her cycling. Late spring was pushing early summer and she missed

her swimming and her North Sea, which was almost just out of her window on the Island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee. Always a great walker, by our standards, she tried to compensate by walking in Philadelphia.

At times, late at night, when she would return to her downtown YWCA home from Chestnut Hill, she would take a brisk walk before going to her tiny room shared with the motherly Dutchwoman. On several occasions, Philadelphia police officers stopped her and cautioned her about walking alone at night. But how could that be? It was unheard of for a girl to be bothered on Goeree-en-Overflakkee, even when alone late at night, atop a dark and lonesome dyke by the North Sea.

Because we did not want Rie to feel alone and a stranger, I asked Margaret Campbell of the Rubber Company's Philadelphia office if she would meet Rie and look out for her a bit. The Campbell family are native Philadelphians going back several generations. Lovingly they took Rie to their hearts, welcoming her as one of the family. Their home is situated in the Chestnut Hill suburb bordering on the Wissahickon Valley, three blocks from Valley Green, the center of the world-famous Fairmount Park. And this opens up another unusual and delightful Philadelphia experience for the Dutch girl.

There was a natural and strong bond between the Campbell family and Rie, fresh from war-torn Europe. Three of the Campbell boys had served in the European theatre of World War II. It was Tom Campbell, a young graduate of Georgetown University, who explained to Rie the remarkable role of this historic city in the stirring formative events of our American history.

As I look back on Rie's adventures and experiences in America I put Philadelphia on top of the list. Her indescribable excitement and elation with America climaxed here. Her letters written from Philadelphia and my talks with Margaret Campbell made me aware of my own apathetic callousness to my priceless American heritage.

Over a period of many years I had made frequent visits to the "City of Brotherly Love." The Philadelphia Branch of the United States Rubber Company is located at Fifth and Locust

Streets, a short two blocks from Independence Square. The most natural and direct route from the hotels and business section of the city is through the old brick arches of Independence Hall and diagonally through the center of the little part—a distance of six or eight blocks. Many, many times I have passed the doors of Independence Hall and walked through the little two-blocks-square Independence Park. But my Philadelphia trips have always been business trips and my mind was completely occupied with business matters to the point where I did not realize I was walking on hallowed ground. Now I saw the heart of America through Rie's eyes.

Here was Rie in Philadelphia, America's third largest city. She was on her own for the first time. She had her first job in America, with Gimbel Brothers. This department store covers the block on Chestnut Street between Eighth and Ninth Streets. Independence Square at Sixth and Chestnut Streets was only two or three blocks from her Holland Fair assignment. So she went to Independence Hall many times, where she read one of the greatest documents of human history—the Declaration of Independence—and reread its immortal conclusion:

> And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, our Sacred Honor.

Here, too, she visited many times the best-known symbol of freedom in the world. There is something about the broken Liberty Bell which inspired an affectionate reverence in the Dutch girl from Europe's North Sea. She will always remember the Liberty Bell inscription from Leviticus 25:10—

> Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.

All of the foregoing Philadelphia experiences of the Dutch girl were very exciting, one will agree. Yet there is still another

important facet to the Philadelphia jewel which fascinated her. To fully understand it you must remember her girlhood on the low, flat, below-sea-level Island of Goree-en-Overflakkee.

Margaret Campbell tells me Rie spent much of her time in Walnut Hill exploring the Valley Green area of Fairmont Park which follows the full length of Wissahickon Creek. Whatever its original meaning, the Wissahickon is synonymous with sylvan park beauty. In considerable part it retains a virgin appearance in the Wissahickon ravine, often described as a miniature Alpine gorge. Here in the stream the trout lie in sun-dappled pools. Here along the creek banks Edgar Allen Poe strolled and left a beautiful legend of it in his tale entitled "The Elk."

She walked the many miles of foot trails and bridle paths that honeycomb the park, where one never sees or hears an automobile. The time was late May and early June, which is the early-summer season in Philadelphia. Following the quiet trails along the river banks, through the hemlocks and laurel and shad bushes and luxuriant ferns she found the Devil's Pool and the famous Livezey House and the old Tavern at Valley Green.

She also discovered the oldest historical monument in Philadelphia, called Indian Rock. This historic rock reminds one of the days before the advent of the white man, when Indians were the only inhabitants and trails the only roads. And atop Indian Rock she found the statue of the famous Indian, Tedyuscung.

The United States Rubber Company has many private, leased telephone wires from headquarters to various company locations —one to Philadelphia. Every day Rie would stop at the Philadelphia Branch on her way to the Holland Fair before the 9:30 opening. Promptly at nine o'clock our Philadelphia switchboard operator would put her through to my office.

She was very happy and wanted to stay on in Philadelphia after the closing of the Holland Fair. One day she said, "Pops, what would you think about my finding a job here until early fall?" I replied, "I think it would be fine if you want to stay and if you can find a suitable temporary job. When the Holland Fair closes, take a week or two and look around. You can always

come home to Stamford and Eva Sisson will again throw out the dragnet to find a job in New York."

Next came a letter to Dorothy. She wrote, "I did not know poverty and slums existed in America. The poor children in Philadelphia tenements made me sad. I would like to do something to help them. I have asked the YWCA and a lady at the church who I should see to get a social service job. I would work for these poor children all summer if I can get enough for my board and room." She could not understand the Negro problem. She saw and felt barriers of discrimination and poverty here in the very cradle of freedom. She wrote in her diary:

> At home we have no Negroes and all we know about them is what we read. In Stamford I saw the first little ones, how darling they are. Their teeth seem so much whiter and their hair is so cute. In Philadelphia there are so many more, specially to see the Holland Fair. They were so excited about Dutch things I looked out for their visits all the time. I wanted to understand them better. It was social service work among the poor Negro children I wanted to do so bad but couldn't.

Some days later she phoned me on the tie-line. "Pops," she said, "I have seen the right social service people but they tell me I have to have a degree and there is no chance." I replied, "Skip the social service—forget it. Have our people in Philadelphia put you in touch with the best employment agencies. In the meantime I will talk to Eva Sisson and have her phone our Philadelphia office." Quick as a flash she replied, "Please, Pops, do not talk to Miss Sisson. I want to get a job all by myself. You know I am not easily discouraged."

I was going away on a business trip so I sent her my itinerary. It was in New Orleans on June 13, 1950, Rie's twenty-third birthday, that I received a letter from her. She sent it in care of the Roosevelt Hotel. She wanted to be sure I would get it, so she put on the envelope with the address, "Mr. Roosevelt, he comes your hotel June 13." The letter follows:

Philadelphia,
11 June 1950

Dear Pops,

I am very happy. I got a good job all my myself. Miss Sisson, U S Rubber Co. did not help me. Netherlands Trade Commission and Netherlands Club did not help me. I go to summer camp at Owl's Head, Maine, with children of Bancroft Home–about 80 children. I get 100 dollars a month and board and room and live with college girls, summer teachers. I love the mentally retarded children and want to help them.

My job goes 15 June to 15 September. When I finished at Holland Fair last night I decided to go to see Miss Colby, who I learned about from a lady on the Board of Welfare.

I took a streetcar a long way and then walked. The lady told me she did not need me very much. But she asked me to play with the children and then she asked me to stay for lunch. I love the children very much and she hired me.

Now I go to Stamford to get heavy clothes needed in Maine. Also I have to get a Social Security number in Stamford.

I will be with Nannie and Ann on my birthday 13 June. Am sorry you will not be there. I will go to Philadelphia on the morning of the 14th as the lady is superstitious and does not want me on the 13th.

I am sorry I cannot see you Pops when you come home. Maybe you and Nannie can go to Maine to Owl's Head on the wooded point near Rockland, Maine.

Love,
Rie

THIRTEEN

Bancroft Camp

Where there's a will there's a way and self-confidence is almost an understatement as far as Rie is concerned. Think of her responsibilities and experience. She would not be denied—"to get a job all by myself"—"to get a social service job helping children." On Sunday morning, following the close of the Holland Fair, she had made her way to Haddonville, New Jersey, seeking and finding her opportunity—"I love the children very much and she hired me."

Most institutions are the lengthened shadow of some individual. Bancroft School was founded by Margaret Bancroft sixty-seven years ago; thus the soundness of her idea and ideals is proven. Miss Bancroft was a teacher in the public schools of Philadelphia prior to founding this special boarding school for the child who cannot progress at a normal rate in a normal environment. It was a small, retarded boy in one of her public school classes who aroused her interest in this special field of child training. She took her problem to two noted medical men, eminent in the fields of surgery and neurology. With the help of their wise counsel, she founded the school that bears her name.

To make effective Miss Bancroft's ideals, the present by-laws incorporate the rule that "a majority of the Trustees shall at all times be parents of the children then students of the School."

The home school is located in the quiet residential town of Haddonfield, New Jersey, but within easy reach of Philadelphia

—ten minutes by automobile from the Camden side of the bridge spanning the Delaware River. The estate comprises twenty-three acres of beautiful lawns and gardens and the playgrounds are a child's paradise. There are two main buildings—"The Lindens" and "The Lullworth."

The annual session of the Bancroft School covers the full twelve months of the year. Very early in its history, this continuity made it obvious that a complete change of scene and climate in the summer—a summer vacation—would be desirable. So, in 1895, Margaret Bancroft purchased the Garthgannon estate on Penobscot Bay, near Rockland, Maine. There are twenty-eight acres, comprising a heavily wooded promontory extending into Penobscot Bay. It is located one mile from the tiny and historic village of Owl's Head and six miles by land and two by water from the town of Rockland.

In the early part of August, Nannie and Pops visited Rie at her job in Maine. Rockland is located in one of the many sheltered, natural harbors of island-studded Penobscot Bay and is Maine's principal lobster port. Across the sparkling water of the harbor lies a heavily wooded, dark green point known as Owl's Head. Shaped like an arrow pointing out to sea, Owl's Head Point is clothed in silence under dark coniferous trees, a virgin forest. From Rockland, Owl's Head appears to be in a brooding mood and one can easily understand its early American history—the haunt of privateers and the scene of bloody Indian massacres. Yet, once in the forest, the graceful, white birches and the ever-changing blue and grey sparkling water seen through the trees add the touch of a smile to the mood.

When we drove around the Bay on a narrow, curving, unfrequented road to Bancroft Camp, it was the sunset hour. Of course we were not aware of the historic incident taking place on the council green of the Camp, known as "Trails End."

Take a perfectly tended grass golf green and cut off the curving edges to make it square. Frame it on three sides with tall, stately, dark green pine sentinels with tops like cathedral spires. Where you would place the altar in a chapel, erect a child's-size Indian totem pole—"child's-size" is about twenty-five feet tall. Be sure your totem pole is carved and painted in au-

thentic Indian fashion. In front of the totem pole build sturdy, low, wood plank benches and paint them a blending forest green—enough benches growing out of the ground on low, wood posts to seat eighty children. Then you will have an exact carbon copy of the Bancroft Camp miniature council green which they call "Trails End." All trails at Garthgannon begin and end at "Trails End" and there you will find a number of Indian trails that date back to long before the first white man, Champlain, set eyes and sails on Penobscot Bay.

We learned that two moons before our arrival the Chief of the Abenakis sent a runner to Bancroft Camp. Chief Samoset of the Penobscot Tribe would appear over the horizon and point his canoe to the Bancroft smoke signal at the sunset hour of the first moonless Friday night in August. The children gathered on the high granite point above the spot where the Indian trails cross in front of Deep Cove. They watched the tiny craft come closer until the canoe beached below them.

Chief Samoset stepped out in full war regalia—head feathers, war-painted face, a colorful blanket around him. Instead of weapons he carried the pipe of peace and his appearance was not unlike the totem pole. They all went to the ceremonial fire, now glowing embers, before the totem pole. Here much wampum and many shells were exchanged. The pipe of peace was passed around and peace was promised for an indefinite period. The children returned to their Garthgannon home and to bed.

It was near eight o'clock when we drove through the massive stone gates and followed the winding private road to the Camp. Dusk was closing in rapidly and the fading light, filtering through the dark-green pine treetops, was pink and mauve from the sunset afterglow. Suddenly we came out into an open space and on our right was the council green—"Trails End." Standing in front of the totem pole by the fading embers of the smoke-signal fire was a small group of the camp staff talking with Chief Samoset who was really one of the camp counselors. Rie rushed out to the car, delighted to see us. The entire group extended us a royal welcome as Rie introduced us as "her folks" and we happily responded, telling them we were simply Nannie and Pops.

Rie took us on a quick tour, pointing out the various buildings, recreation locations, and introducing us to many of the staff. She took us to see her room in a dormitory and introduced us to one of the summer teachers, Carole Anderson, who becomes important in this story. Carole is a beautiful and talented young lady from Arlington, Massachusetts, a student in the University of Massachusetts at Amherst; and she taught swimming to the girl "owlets" of Bancroft Camp. Now we call her "Cupid."

Most important for Nannie and Pops to see was Rie's classroom where she taught sewing to the little "owlets." The low chairs and tables, which she proudly told us she had painted, were pint size. She had mounted and tacked pictures of interesting scenes on the wall—quite a few showing her beloved Holland.

Before returning to Rockland with Rie, we drove around the main building of the Camp, Garthgannon Lodge, which commands an extensive view over the water. It is a magnificent mansion and from its windows, porch, and the landscaped lawns points to vistas around the compass such as one rarely sees. Looking across the dark water reflecting the iridescent afterglow, we saw the twinkling lights of Rockland, and a few miles to the right of the town the lighted windows of "The Samoset"—one of Maine's finest summer-resort hotels, which looked like a castle of a thousand gleaming candles. Within calling distance of Garthgannon Lodge were several ships of the United States Navy Fleet riding at anchor, one a mighty superdreadnaught. Such a pretty sight—these lighted battleships and their launches taking the men to Rockland for brief shore leave. You see, Maine's annual "Lobster Festival" was opening that evening. The town was in gala holiday dress and spirit, and filled with Navy men. So that you will understand—one of the trial courses of the Navy lies just outside the harbor and from Garthgannon one may see the various types of vessels, designed for our defense, going through maneuvers throughout the day, to anchor under the Owl's Head cliffs at night.

FOURTEEN

Maine Week End

We asked Rie what she would most like to do during our week end in Maine. She said, "Bar Harbor," which is about eighty-five miles east by north from Owl's Head. This was a most welcome suggestion as Bar Harbor is one of our favorite spots and we know it well, having previously explored every nook and cranny of Acadia National Park.

Mount Desert Island is a part of Acadia National Park, and here the town of Bar Harbor is located. The island is steeped in early-American history and its discovery dates back to September 1604 when the intrepid explorer, Samuel de Champlain, dropped the anchor of his lateen-rigged bark into what is now known as Frenchman's Bay—sixteen years before the coming of the Pilgrims to Cape Cod.

So it was decided we would leave Garthgannon early the following morning and breakfast enroute. As we approached Mount Desert Island, surrounded by the booming surf of the North Atlantic, the bold range of Mount Desert mountains dominated Rie's horizon. Eighteen mountains literally rising out of the sea, bold headlands, sheer granite cliffs. Covering this rocky island are heavy forests of pine, hemlock, spruce, fir, with a sprinkling of white birch accentuating the dark green pattern. This was the panorama unfolding before her eager eyes. The central, focal point of the vista spread out before her was Mount Cadillac, the highest point of land on the Atlantic coastline within the boundaries of the United States, which we told her we would ascend.

"Desert," she said. "How do you spell it?" We explained that it is not spelled as it is pronounced. Rather it is pronounced like the last course of a meal. "And how did it come by its funny name?" she asked. We told her that on the first morning, after discovery of the Island, Champlain observed that the mountains, which had appeared so clearly the day before, were now obscured by fog. This caused Champlain to exclaim to his men, "Les Monts deserte!" (The mountains have deserted us). Thus the Island was named Mt. Desert Island, and to this day residents accent the second syllable of the word. We also told her to listen closely and she would hear the natives call Bar Harbor "Baa Habba." We explained to her that Bar Harbor town, which we located for her on a map of Mt. Desert Island, is America's foremost port of distinction and occupies a small arc of Frenchman's Bay, looking out over the many sea-cradle islands, into the North Atlantic. We paused only briefly in Bar Harbor to fill our picnic hamper and drove on the several miles to the Park entrance where we picked up maps from the Forest Rangers.

Just inside the park, at the foot of Cadillac Mountain, flows Sieur de Monts Spring and here, as was our custom in previous years, we stopped to drink the crystal-clear, cold, pure water and to fill a thermos jug. Here, too, we paused to show Rie a rough-hewn granite slab and to read to her the inscription on the bronze plaque. Few visitors to the Park take the time to stop at this simple monument.

> In memory of George Buckman Dorr—1853–1944. Lover of Nature, Father of this National Park. Steadfast in his zeal to make the beauties of this island available to all.

We told her Mr. Dorr was a gentleman of considerable means who spent his lifetime and his fortune for the purpose outlined on the bronze tablet. It was through his efforts and influence that Congress established Acadia National Park in 1919. It was a part of the Evangeline Acadia country—hence the name. When Mr. Dorr reached the retirement age of seventy, he was re-

appointed Director of the Park each year by a special Congressional Enabling Act until his death in 1944 at the age of ninety-one. He died penniless, after spending his large fortune that all Americans may better enjoy the beauties of Acadia National Park. We thought this a fitting introduction for the Dutch girl from the North Sea Island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee, as we entered one of America's wonderlands.

An Acadia Park sojourn is an experience for your book of memories. Its charms are many—a land of sparkling waters—its forty-five square miles encompass mountains and forests of such grandeur and of such accessibility that they vie with Yellowstone and Yosemite, in miniature, by size comparison. There is an added attraction to Acadia—the rugged rock-bound coast and headlands jutting far out into the North Atlantic. The bold headlands divide the coast into numerous bays and harbors. Here, too, is the only true fjord in America, Somes Sound, a deep fissure cutting the mountain range nearly in two, and, seen from the mountains, appears to bleed the island. The sparkling waters include the many deep blue lakes and ponds in the Alpine valleys.

To orient Rie by showing her a high-relief view of the island and coast line contour, we drove the spectacular, winding road that leads to the 1535-foot summit of Mount Cadillac. At the top are four natural, smooth, rock observation points looking over the breathtaking vistas around the compass. The summit of the mountain still possesses, in sheltered spots, the smooth polished surfaces which were produced by the great ice sheet which moved over the rock in prehistoric times. Underfoot one can actually see erosion taking its gradual toll—frost-split, lichen-clad rocks with stunted evergreen shrubs precariously growing in rock crevices. Far below lay the sparkling blue waters of Frenchman's Bay, dotted with dark green islands. The mountains sloped away in purple grandeur. The vast ocean looked peaceful from this height, and the lobster boats and pleasure craft in the Bay were toy size. Then, through the lenses of the sweeping telescopes, Rie had a close-up preview of some of the things she was soon to see—the town of Bar Harbor, Scoodic

Point and Headland on the mainland across Frenchman's Bay, Thunder Hole, Jordan Pond, Seal Harbor with the Rockefeller "Eagle Nest" estate atop a mountain, and Great Head headland. Rie was at a loss for words to express her thoughts, quite unusual for her. She simply concentrated her active mind to grasp the picture as we briefly described what she was seeing.

To complete Rie's orientation, so that she could fit together the pieces of the pattern we planned to weave, we took her on a yacht tour of Frenchman's Bay. The swift, sleek, powerful boat followed the high cliff shore. Almost at once we passed a large estate, the house and grounds entirely obscured by a high fence. We told Rie that was one of the oldest and finest estates around Bar Harbor, owned by a lovely, elderly lady who counts among her friends all Americans who love flowers. She extends to all the hospitality of her fabulous garden, one of the finest in the world. We explained to Rie the high fence was not to keep the people out but to keep the flowers in Reef Point Gardens, and we promised to show her the garden as a last and fitting climax to Bar Harbor.

The entire shore line on the Frenchman's Bay side of the Island is a mass of sheer, perpendicular cliffs and massive tumbling granite boulders. We passed between Thurcap Island and Schooner Head Cliffs, where with a bit of imagination the outline of a schooner under full sail can be seen in a white formation on the side of the cliff. High atop the cliffs runs Ocean Drive, while at sea level we looked into Anemone Cave, Thunder Hole, Great Head, Otter Cliffs, East Point, and Seal Harbor. Then the boat threaded its swift course among the many islands across to Scoodic Point. We returned to Bar Island, which gives the harbor its name. At low tide a wide sand bar rises out of the water, making a land crossing to the island. Acadia-land is greatly influenced by prodigious tides. Nearby is the Bay of Fundy, which you can see on a clear day, where the tides rise and fall so rapidly that narrow channels develop two-way waterfalls—falls that tumble to the westward when the tide roars in—then reverse themselves and tumble to the eastward when the tide boils out to sea. Such tides and troubled waters

are unknown in the North Sea of Holland and the Low Countries. Indeed, Maria was in a new and different world.

Now, it was a simple matter to fit the important pieces of the island into their proper perspective and relationship by starting out on Ocean Drive, one of America's scenic wonders and great engineering feats. It is a beautiful, safe highway, curving around the top edge of the high, granite cliffs that drop perpendicularly to the boulder shore constantly washed by booming waves. Only the deep, rich pocket of the Federal Government would finance and maintain such a highway. On one side, far below, is the sea, dotted with sails in the sun and the North Atlantic horion. On the other side the green forest sprinkled with the nymphlike, graceful white birch trees, suggesting the Greek spirits of the woods. During our many scenic miles around and through the Park, we made two never-to-be-forgotten stops.

If you like booming seas, huge white-creasted waves stirred by rip tides, Thunder Hole, lying below Ocean Drive, is the best place to find them. Here is a high ledge of solid rock, smooth as a table top. Through the ages the angry seas, pounding against the wall, have worn a deep fissure and hole in the softer part of the cliff. When the powerful tide comes in, the swells rush through the fissure and explode in the hole, making a sound like thunder, and often heard at a considerable distance. You can make your way down to the foot of the cliff and feel the salt spray in your face, or you can relax on top of the cliff, and here I have spent many hours reading and writing or just sitting quietly to muse with the sea. On the flat cliff top we spread our picnic feast in a setting fit for the gods.

Dorothy is a tenderfoot when it comes to woods, mountains, and seashore. She was perfectly content to relax in the small park behind the road with a vista looking over Thunder Hole into an interesting seascape filled with tiny white sails. Actually she was seeing the ballooning spinnakers of ocean-going sloops and yachts, a very pretty sight.

I took Rie a short distance into the woods on a trail springy like a mattress of fallen pine needles. Acadia is a very interesting

section. Not only is the Park an absolute sanctuary for wild life, but it lies in a band where the northern and temperate zone floras meet and overlap, mingling the Alpine with the temperate. Rie saw many varieties of flowers and shrubs, including swamp buttercup, evening primrose, wild morning glory, blue vervain, goldenrod, and several varieties of wild aster. The section is a veritable paradise for botanists. I showed her bay bushes with their aromatic leaves and the fragrant sweet fern. Side by side grew the red spruce and the balsam with its scented needles. We found the white fruit of the arbor vitae, a favorite food for deer in winter, and a plant called lambkill, which is harmless to cattle types but fatal to sheep and man. I told her about a despondent botanist who committed suicide by drinking tea brewed from the leaves of lambkill, and showed her an unusual, rare Alpine shrub which in these parts is called Bar Harbor juniper. As a special reward, we heard the plaintive notes of the white-throated sparrow and the full-throated warble of the thrush—neither uncommon in the Acadia bird sanctuary. This being August, we found a few ripe raspberries and high blueberries. The high blueberries are different and apart from their poor cousins that live on the ground—they grow on bushes as high as your head, in Maine's thin-soiled rock covering. They're soft, purplish-blue nuggets that seem to have an iridescent bloom and the delicious berries, freshly picked and instantly eaten, are quite different from those bought in a market.

One of the principal reasons for the trip to Maine was to talk to Rie about her return to Holland. For this I took her down to the foot of Thunder Hole Cliff, which was the spot she liked best of all. Here, like Tweedledee in *Through the Looking Glass,* I said,

> The Walrus and the Carpenter
> Walked on a mile or so,
> And then they rested on a rock
> Conveniently low;
> And all the little Oysters stood
> And waited in a row.

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings."

I asked Rie if she still planned to return to Holland in October and, if so, should I arrange her transportation. "Yes, Pops," she said, "I must return home and I will be ready by October." I told her I understood most if not all of her reasons, thought she was right, and that I would not influence her to change her decision even if I could. Then I asked her what was the most compelling of her many reasons at that moment. She looked at me and said, "It is Johan, Pops. I am afraid I have stayed too long now and may be too late." We sat there for a long time, looking out to sea across the white-crested, boiling breakers, each of us completely withdrawn into our separate selves. Our silence had dimensions and it was then for the first time I felt I had a complete picture of her background and thinking. I knew her thoughts were across the very sea that lapped at our feet—home, on the North Sea Island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee. She will not know until she reads this what was running through my mind—I was putting together all the little pieces of the pattern of her life, which I had been learning about.

Youth! A youngster just growing up—then the cruel war years—another blow, her mother's death—sharing poverty and privation in the aftermath of war—self-improvement against great odds, to counteract defeatism and futility while playing a major mother's role long before that time in a girl's life—a glimpse of romance and fulfillment in fabulous America within her grasp—her castles in the air reduced to ruins—her decision to sacrifice her own opportunity—Rie vs. ten.

One, her sad, kind father. Two, Wim, who contracted recurring malaria in the Dutch East Indies army. Three and four, Bram and Kryn, struggling students in Amsterdam and Leyden Universities. Five, Marius, who craved the education he was denied, in order to help his father in the fields. Six, Rens, fight-

ing St. Vitus's dance as the result of youthful war shock. Seven, lovely Hannie, now fifteen, who had to quit school to take Rie's place as mother of the family. Eight, Aly, the happy, cheerful, little blonde beauty of the de Vos family. Nine, Johan, the youngest boy, a thin, light-haired, sensitive, undernourished war casualty. More than any other in the family, Johan needed love and understanding and someone who believed in him. Ringing in my ears, "It is Johan, Pops. I am afraid I have stayed too long now and may be too late." Ten, pretty, blue-eyed Tineke, who needed a mother.

At long last Rie buried her face in my shoulder and cried. Then, smiling through her tears, she said, "Pops, I am glad you understand. After all, it is a case of one against ten and I can decide only one way—go home."

On another day we visited Reef Point Gardens, which goes back two long generations, and which we had seen from the yacht. Its present owner, Mrs. Max Farrand, is the daughter of the Jones family, which established the summer estate many years ago.

The vista from one side of the arrowhead takes in the whole of Frenchman's Bay, with its pine-clad islands. From another side it looks directly through the wide mouth of the bay to the open sea beyond Great Head and Scoodic Point, while the third side of the arrowhead looks into the Mount Desert Mountains.

Here the Jones family built a large, sprawling, rustic summer home. By sprawling, I refer to the long flagstone porches extending from both ends of the house to glass-enclosed, comfortable vista rooms in which to lounge when nor'easters are roaring and high seas pile up on the point. The forest surrounding the house is predominately coniferous with all types of pine and fir trees native to the North Atlantic region, and has never felt the cutting edge of axe or the scourge of fire. These patriarchs of the forest are hoary with age. The tall, stately white pines carry the harmony of the winds, the venerable red cedars are covered with moss. They are an inspiring sight as they tower to the sky. Sandwiched in are young pine and spruce, little clusters of graceful white birch and poplar, cockspur, hawthorne, low cedars, ash, and hardwood maples.

The forest is a bird paradise. Here you see, and at the right time hear, the songs of the white-throated and white-crowned sparrow, the thrush and tiny wren.

The estate is crisscrossed by curving and hidden paths, some deeply paved with springy pine needles, others with soft grass as well kept as a fine golf putting green. Plain, unpainted, sturdy benches, chairs and low tables invite one to sit and rest and drink in the beauty of the forest and garden—to look at the flowers and to listen to the wind harps in the trees, and the beat of the waves against the rocky shore. The garden furniture was made in England from wood taken from His Royal Majesty's battle-ships. Tiny copper plaques tell you from what battleship the wood was taken. To read these inconspicuous little plaques you must peer closely—

Timber taken from
H.M.S. "Thunderer"
Jutland
1914 1916

From teak taken from
H.M.S. "Powerful"

Mrs. Farrand is a landscape gardener; a tall, stately woman. I have met and talked with her on several occasions while she was walking in her garden. Her face is beautiful, and when she talks with you about her garden, in her soft measured tones, her face lights up with a special glow. On one occasion she suddenly appeared on her balcony while I was looking at her perfectly beautiful single-petal roses directly before her front door. Apparently these unusual and different roses are her great pride and joy. She answered my questions and graciously thanked me for coming to her garden. She hoped I would return often to enjoy it. She told me the plants and flowers are gathered here from all parts of the world, that her gardens have only one order—"Never stop blooming from April through October." She spoke softly and briefly about how well these flowers, gathered from the ends of the earth, get along together and won-

dered why humans could not do as well. Truly a lesson in international good will. Fortunately, she was walking in her garden on the August afternoon of Maria's visit. We introduced the Dutch girl to her and Mrs. Farrand was warmly welcoming.

It was early August and Reef Point Garden was certainly obeying its mistress's injunction to bloom. From the goldenrod and fireweed gaily blooming on either side of the path bordering the bay, to the lush colors of the single-petal roses in front of the house, a riot of color met the eye at every turn of the paths. The air was filled with fragrance from phlox, heliotrope and sweet alyssum. Bees droned lazily among the flowers. One bed was a symphony in gold, blue, and purple. From tiny violas and forget-me-nots in the border, the eye swept upward past the blue vervain and canterbury bells to the tall spikes of hybrid mullein with its pale yellow flowerets. A clump of globe thistle shot out its round flowers in an arc of purple.

Across the path, another bed displayed larkspur and delphinium against a background of gay goldenglow. Graceful clusters of tiger lilies on tall, pencil-thin stems looked down upon the tallest flower lover. In front of a teakwood bench was a bed of all the colors that phlox is capable of showing—white, purple, lavender, pink, rose, maroon, pink and white and two-shaded rose. Rie said they looked like pretty summer frocks for pretty girls. Bugbane, a shrub with flowers like white bayonets pointing heavenward, and towering cranberry bushes in bloom, formed a background for the gay display of color in the flower beds. Bordering the house were petunias, verbena, old-fashioned pinks, mingled with decorative foliage. Many varieties of sedum and succulent plants covered a native rock garden nearby. Gardeners worked unobtrusively on the estate but one knew the single-petal roses just outside her front door were cared for by Mrs. Farrand, each bush showing the loving care of its mistress. She told us, "These single roses are rare, because practically no one asks for them." As the roses open, they reveal a center of entrancing beauty.

If one tires of the blooming garden, a walk in the cool, green woods that border the lawnward side of the estate reveals beauty and creates a feeling of quiet and restfulness. Bracken ferns

grow tall and abundant, while the ground is covered with the shiny leaves and bright red bunchberries. A gate from the woods leads into a walled garden where dahlia and chrysanthemum plants share this plot with a small vegetable garden and some young apple and quince trees.

Rie's visit to Reef Point Gardens seemed to her all too short. Reluctantly she left the gay flowers and followed the path along the shore with its wild spirea, hare-bell, and sweet fern. Never will she forget the gracious lady, the only one in Bar Harbor who invites everyone to enter and enjoy her garden at will and who said to us, "No one who really loves a garden can keep it for himself. It must be shared with others."

As long as Mrs. Farrand lives and has the strength, she will maintain her Reef Point Gardens estate. But she looks to the future, too, and has willed her gardens to the public, to be administered by the city of Bar Harbor.

FIFTEEN

Paul

One must stretch the imagination far to move from a 1949 hot, humid summer on the strait-laced Island in the North Sea, filled with drudgery and privation, to a cool, comfortable summer in 1950 in a modern American hotel on the coast of Maine. This is mostly stuff that dreams are made on, but this time it was reality. Except for my talk with Rie at Thunder Hole, I mostly drove and listened during our week end in Acadia National Park. But Dorothy and Rie talked a blue streak and thus did I learn the details of Rie's Bancroft Camp experience.

Pick a small New England co-ed college where all the students are acquainted. Select a small group of girls and boys and send them to a vacation dreamland on the Maine coast. Introduce the Dutch girl from Goeree-en-Overflakkee and watch her swift adjustment. It was amazing how quickly she became a leader in the group of student counselors and teachers.

It was her love and understanding of children that brought her this opportunity, following her different experience with the Holland Fair. She quickly recognized the individual situations and studied the background of the children assigned to her responsibility—sewing, hiking, and play supervision. All the students of Bancroft School are children, even the few in their twenties and thirties. She considered her work a great privilege and her contribution to these children greater than would be the case with normal children. She talked about the various types of approach and the responses from the different children.

She recognized, too, her responsibility by the power of example. Rough spots in her pronunciation, natural when she first came to America, were polished off, partly due to lip reading involved with certain children. Many fine points it takes Americans years to acquire she picked up quickly in her Bancroft Camp adjustment.

Her recreational activities were many and varied. College dating—quite different from dating on Goeree-en-Overflakkee, I can assure you. She was raised by the sea, and you can imagine her delight in sharing with the other counselors the Camp equipment; canoeing, sailing, motor-boating, and fishing. Deep-sea fishing is excellent and many a "big one" can be landed or lost. Her off hours were filled with hiking through the woods, picnics, boiled lobsters cooked on the rocks with seaweed and sea water, camping and, best of all, swimming. As you would know, she is as much at home in the water as a seal, and she was always ready for a swim with Carole any hour of the day or night.

Returning to Rockland from Bar Harbor, we stopped for dinner in a most attractive "Lobster House," where Rie had her first shore dinner.

At the table Rie told us about Paul Duggan, a cousin of Carole Anderson. Carole's family had been to Owl's Head to see her and Paul accompanied them. That week Rie was assigned the duty of camp hostess, to meet and greet the relatives and friends of the children. Paul saw her but did not meet her. He told Carole he would like to drive up the following week end, but Rie was busy, so he picked the second week end, which Carole thought would be open. Rie told us, "But then I had your letter and I had to write him a letter telling him Pops and Nannie would be here and not to come that week end. I asked him if he could come a week later."

The drive back to Owl's Head through Rockland at the sunset hour was filled with new and different sights. The activities on the Bay were varied and interesting. The chug-chug of the lobster boats, with their ever-present circle of hovering gulls, the mail steamers returning from the island resorts they serve, old lumber-laden schooners with patched, brown sails tacking

skillfully to make the harbor by sunset, the lovely sailboats which look like huge white butterflies, and, finally, ships of the American Fleet at anchor off Owl's Head Point.

From Garthgannon we looked over the Camden Hills extending to the northeast as far as the eye can reach. The wooded islands, casting dark shadows on the colorful evening waters of Penobscot Bay, presented an ever changing panorama. Then we really had our best look at Garthgannon, as it was rather dark when we were there the previous evening. Several acres have been cleared for flower gardens, open fields, and the children's own gardens. A description of Garthgannon would not be complete without mention of the flowers growing everywhere. All the old-fashioned varieties dear to the heart of the "down-Easter" not only furnish pleasure and beauty without, but are an abundant source of decoration indoors. Rock-garden plants have been introduced to the old grey ledges creeping up through the soil, and in one spot a lily pool has been made by using the ledges themselves. Here, lilies from nearby fresh-water lakes have been planted, and fish-taddies, snails, little green frogs, and the like, are interesting dwellers.

We watched the sunset and the pink, mauve afterglow turn to deep purple and black on the water. We watched the flashing beacons of the Breakwater Lighthouse swing across the water, the lights come on in Rockland and nearby Camden and in the Samoset Hotel. This was our last evening with Rie—we were leaving for Connecticut the following morning.

We were in our car backing around to head out of Garthgannon when out of the darkness, by "Trails End," we heard a car stop, a door slam and then a girl calling, "Rie! Wait a minute!" It was Carole. She opened the door of our car and breathlessly told Rie, "Paul is here. He did not get your letter before he left Boston!" We told Carole we would deliver Rie in the lobby of the hotel in Rockland at 10 P.M., where her group could meet her. Dorothy and I did not meet Paul Duggan until some weeks later—but you are now being introduced to a very important person.

Several days after returning from Maine, I wrote to my sisters and the Leeders in Columbus as follows:

I used to wonder about the thoughts and reactions of Rie's family and their friends which make up most of the village of Ooltgensplaat. After my Bancroft Camp visit, which is the first time I have seen her since she left for the Holland Fair in Philadelphia, there is no uncertainty in my mind about her return to the Island.

Of course she has changed. Adventure and experience bring change and broaden horizons to anyone. Some folks will understand and others will not. . . .

The most understanding, in my opinion, will be her father. . . . Customs and tradition change slowly, but Rie has moved centuries in a matter of months—by Goeree-en-Overflakkee standards. Abraham de Vos will be proud of his daughter, of that I now have no mental reservations. I want you to know, too, the stature and quality of Abraham de Vos grows greater every time Rie talks to me about him . . .

Ever since the "Queen Elizabeth" slipped out of her Southampton berth last February, I have been asked many times, as I know you have: Will Rie stay in America? No. I am sure she will return to Holland in October. Might she not change her mind after spending some time in America? No. Now that all who know her have accepted her return as a reality, the questions change: Do you think she will return to America soon? Not in the reasonably near foreseeable future, in my opinion.

I have never asked Rie the first question—nor will I ask her the second. Maybe she thinks she knows, but old man experience, "Pops," has his reservations about that one too. Old man experience tells me, too, that the one sure thing about the ladies is their unpredictability. Here I go sticking out my chin, but if you would like to have me hazard a prediction of things to come: (1) She will marry and settle down to a career of motherhood, which could be a satisfying career for her. (2) She will become an influential and powerful leader

among the underprivileged, either in the Netherlands or in America.

Of course this is only speculation on my part and either course she chooses will be the right one, in my opinion. But of this I am convinced, insofar as the future is ever predictable—I believe with reasonable certainty there will be no middle ground between the two. . . .

Remember, the foregoing was written before I knew, or perhaps even Rie knew, that Paul was going to have some very decided opinions about Rie's future.

Rie's decision did not surprise John Cassam; he is a man of great experience and has a keen understanding of human nature. He is, in a sense, a world-citizen, dealing with people of all nations and languages. He moves many people—individuals and families—as well as huge tonnage, through the maze of Immigrations and Customs all over the world. It is just routine for John, but not as simple as it sounds, to move a family from Des Moines, Iowa, to Johannesburg, South Africa, or from Australia to Argentina.

John recommended a freighter crossing rather than a luxury liner for Rie. He said, "Rie is in no great hurry. I can assure you the accommodations will be first class in every way and she will have a new experience. Let me work on it for a few days and then I will call you." I replied, "I'll leave it to you, John. You make the arrangements." We decided on a sailing date close to October 15th. A few days later John called me and I went to his office. He told me he had arranged passage on a new Danish freighter scheduled to sail from New York around October 15th to 17th.

When Rie returned from Maine she went to New York twice to see John Cassam. He arranged all the complicated papers in connection with Immigrations and Customs, including her permit to re-enter the U.S.A. within two years on her current visa. These things were done with the greatest of ease through John's efficient, smooth-functioning organization. Thus Rie avoided the

long waiting lines and the complexities involved in her leaving America, and gained the privilege of returning any time she chose within two years.

I was with Rie on her visit to John's office when he phoned the Steamship Line and confirmed the October 17th sailing date. He also asked about European stops scheduled before Rotterdam. John put down the phone, pushed his glasses up on his forehead, as is his custom, and, with a perfectly straight face but merry eyes, he said, "Young lady, it looks like you are going on a Cook's Tour. Your ship will stop in the ports of Rouen, Le Havre, and Antwerp before tying up in your home port of Rotterdam. You will have plenty of time while in Rouen and Le Havre to visit nearby Paris. Have you ever seen Paris?" Rie told him she had never been in Paris and would be delighted with this opportunity.

More times than I can tell you, our friends mentioned the possibility of Rie's finding a heart interest in America that might change her thinking about returning to Holland, or that would bring her back if she did return to her home. And why not? At twenty-three she was pretty, charming, talented, and unusually interesting to Americans because of her different background. Everyone who met her loved her and wanted her to find a full, rich life in America.

I am no different from my friends and have no crystal ball to peer into the future. The difference of opinion was simply due to my having more facts and being closer to the picture—so I thought. Actually my friends were right and I was wrong. However, except that Carole Anderson's cousin, Paul Duggan, appeared on the scene late in Rie's American experience, this would be a fairy tale without the American ending, "and they lived happily ever after." It took this fine, young Irishman to tip the scales and mind you, on the other side of the scales were several good, eligible heart prospects plus an American home and the educational opportunities heaped high by the Leeders and my sisters.

It was obvious, too, that the Leeders and my sisters saw to it that she met a few attractive eligibles in Ohio, where she had some interesting dates. Likewise, she met quite a few young

men in Philadelphia through the Campbell girls and through her connection with Gimbel Brothers Department Store which sponsored the Holland Fair. But it was in Maine that she had a college girl's dream of dating. Carole Anderson and the other college girls at Bancroft Camp saw to that. There were several college boys working at the Camp and there were other college undergraduates doing summer work in the many vacation locations on Penobscot Bay shores.

Rie's diary is filled with fascinating little notes about Bob and Mike and movies and little parties. Also running through these recorded impressions is her duty and decision to return to her brothers and sisters—she had promised them she would. Several of the young men she met in America became serious and there was more than one proposal of marriage. But she was honest and frank with everyone, including her admirers, about her intentions to return to take over the household duties in Goeree-en-Overflakkee.

But, this was before Paul Duggan put in his appearance. Carole found opportunity before the time Paul first met Rie to sing the praises and virtues of Paul to Rie and Rie to Paul. How the ladies of all ages love to be match-makers when they think they are right! Anyway, except for this powerful boost, I doubt if our girl would have found her Prince Charming in America. Her time in Maine was fast running out and sailing time only two months away.

Nor could Paul have picked a spot more suitable to charm a lady. It was Carole's father, one of New England's expert and popular fishermen and hunter who taught Paul the wonders of outdoor Maine, from the time he was a young boy until he entered the Armed Services.

Paul is as much at home on Maine's North Atlantic shores as Rie on the North Sea shore of Goeree-en-Overflakkee. He knows Penobscot Bay as well as the palm of his hand. He can handle a sailboat with the same ease and dexterity as Rie her cycle atop the dykes on her North Sea island. Thus their weekends together in Maine were filled with sailing, beautiful beaches, swimming, exploration, and seafood.

They would set out in their sailboat, fixing their course from

the squat little tower of Owl's Head lighthouse on the knoll above the keeper's house. A white boardwalk and flight of steps lead from the house to the tower, which is more than a century old. Situated on a high wooded point rising steeply from the water, it is a dramatic accent in the coastal panorama. Seen from the stern of their boat, the heavy blue-spruce forest made Owl's Head Point a silhouette of raven's-wing darkness against the bright sparkling sea. Their course was to the many islands that stud the Bay and behind them the Camden hills faded into a deep purple line on the horizon. Penobscot Bay, with its islands great and small, its irregular shore line and its background of superb hills, is one of the most beautiful bays in the world. I need not tell you more about the Penobscot land of enchantment which has been best told by Hawthorne and Longfellow who graduated together from Maine's Bowdoin College, fifty miles from Owl's Head, and where Longfellow was professor of Modern Languages for many years. It was to the Penobscot country Henry Thoreau went decades ago and here he found the guide whom he has immortalized in his classic, "The Maine Woods."

Sailing on the sparkling waters—running before spanking or becalmed winds made no difference—sunny hours on faraway, unfrequented white sand beaches—firm, clean shimmering sand, hard to the water's edge and beyond—heavy surf breaking over the beaches and booming against the broken granite shore—boiling live lobsters in sea water and seaweed—baking clams and lobsters and green corn at twilight—feasting on sea food by a beach fire under the starry skies by the sea.

Paul is an expert "beach-chef." He always carries his camping equipment in his car when he drives to Maine's vacation land. He delighted in serving up New England sea food to Rie on the shore. Clams were theirs for the digging on the beaches at low tide. The bay is always dotted with lobstermen pulling their pots and if they think you are "all right folks" they will sell you Maine "shorts," under ten inches but over nine, and with good conscience too. But you have to go out to sea to pick up the "shorts" from the lobstermen's boats, as they are never

brought to shore for sale. So, with lobsters and clams and green corn, which was in season, their feasts were fit for a king.

Together they would gather the driftwood and granite stones. Paul would build a convincing fire which they fed and kept burning fiercely for an hour until the stones were really hot. Finally, Paul cleaned out the embers and put the hot stones in the pit which he first lined with seaweed, the familiar olive-brown rockweed that grows right to the high-tide mark. Then thick layers of seaweed were piled high and wide so that the fringes hung well over the whole stone circle. The result looked like a tiny thatched cottage on one of Penobscot Bay's islands which Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote about with such nostalgic charm. Once the final load of seaweed was piled on, Paul and Rie had nothing to do but—take a dip in the sea; walk close to the water and watch the curve of the horizon and the pale, clear sunset sky while the sound of the surf was in their ears; watch the lights on the shore and the ships in the bay; see the graceful wheeling gulls as they settled for the night. At their feet they would hear the faint, clear call of the sandpipers and see a little band of them light at the very edge of an outgoing wave, running swiftly along the hard sand until the water wet their feet and sent them fluttering overhead again, more driftwood on the fire and a feast.

This, then, was the scene and the setting for romance in Maine. The week end they met, Jupiter was their evening star and the moon was in the stage of the last quarter moving successively through her complete cycle of phases—new moon, first quarter, full moon and again last quarter over the Labor Day week end.

Paul told Carole's mother about the plans of Nannie and Pops to spend some time vacationing at New Hampshire's Lake Sunapee. You will believe me when I tell you Mrs. Anderson is a very understanding woman. She immediately invited Rie to spend this time in her Arlington home. We drove to Sunapee by way of Boston and delivered Rie to the Anderson home for an eight-day stay. The postal cards came almost daily to Lake Sunapee and we learned once more that "Boston was her Oyster."

Carole went home from Amherst to join in the fun over two week ends.

While in Boston I had lunch with Paul in South Station. There I told him my friends would like to have a thumbnail sketch of him. He was twenty-seven years old in November, 1950. He was born and lived all his life in Arlington, which is only a few miles from famed Harvard Square in Cambridge and the Boston Commons. He graduated from Arlington High School and served for three years in World War II. He was in the Pacific Theatre, "T4" assigned to the Adjutant's General Staff at General Douglas MacArthur's Tokyo Headquarters.

His school program upset by the war and set back by three years, he was at loose ends to know how best to proceed, when he returned from the Far East to New England. One of his friends, a fishing and hunting partner of his uncle, is associated with the wool trade in Boston, and it was on a fishing trip in Maine that Paul chose his profession in wool.

It is about as difficult to break into the upper brackets of Boston's conservative wool fraternity as it is for a young lawyer, fresh out of school, to crash the law firms of the Boston Cabots and Lodges. To prepare himself, Paul took a special two-year course in the Bryant-Stratton Business School in Boston, one of America's oldest and best. Then he started from scratch with a successful partnership dealing in raw wool, Fulton & Hervey, members of the Wool Exchange and the Boston Wool Trade Association, the stock exchange of the wool trade, the "Wall Street of wool."

Both partners in the firm are keenly interested in Paul's progress with them. To better fit himself for a career in wool with this fine firm, he took special night class work at Boston University.

He is learning all phases of the wool business and presently is active for his firm on the Exchange. He is a realistic, hard-working, practical young man with ambition and perseverance and he is making rapid and sound progress. He knows his wool from the sheep's back to the woolen manufacturers' looms.

Paul likes music and does somthing about it—piano lessons. And, he has started to learn Dutch. He is one of two children,

boys, in the Duggan family. The evening of the day we delivered Rie to the Anderson home, Paul took her, along with his father and Carole's father, to the Arlington Town Meeting. Town Meetings in New England are important affairs. American freedom would be safer for posterity if all responsible citizens would take an active part and interest in their political welfare, such as Town Meetings.

Over our coffee, in Boston's South Station, Paul told me about his plans, already discussed with the partners of the firm. He planned to fly to Europe in June, 1951, and go to Goeree-en-Overflakkee, there to marry Rie. Nice plans, but love in bloom has an urgency.

SIXTEEN

Maria Returns to Holland

When Rie left Columbus to find a job in the East, she promised the Columbus folks she would return before sailing for Holland. On the way she wanted to stop in Philadelphia to see the Campbells and in Baltimore to see the Hildebrands. She said she would like to travel by bus between Baltimore and Columbus. I have a definite antipathy for bus travel and when I suggested the train she said, "But I could better see America by bus." Come to think of it, she may have something there, I thought. So I agreed and arranged for her to break her trip by an overnight stop with good friends, Jay and Eva Beavers in Pittsburgh.

Jay and Eva Beavers met her at the bus station and drove her to their lovely home in suburban Pittsburgh for dinner and overnight. It was a clear night, unusual for the "Smoky City," if you know what I mean. After dinner they drove Rie around and through the "City of Steel," around the curving boulevards where the beautiful homes are hidden in the high hills.

By good rights are Pittsburgh's skies red by night, for the great industrial fires and furnaces are seldom out. Here, where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers cleave the hills to meet and form the mighty Ohio, is one of the most magnificent city sites in the world, comparable to those of Edinburgh and Florence. Surrounded by wooded hills and splendid bluffs, the seething city bursts the bonds with which the Y-shaped channnel of the two source rivers would bind it. The Y-shaped point of land

is called the Golden Triangle and is the heart of the city. Here, probably, is concentrated the greatest wealth of its kind in the world—coal, coke, pig iron, steel, aluminum, glass, cork, and chemicals—to mention only the most important products in which Pittsburgh is first.

Rie saw a breath-taking vista from the top of Mount Washington looking north across the Monongahela River into the heart of the city. A focal point for the millions of lights spreading over the city and hills were the huge steel mills, some glowing red, some blinding white, showering sparks high into the air. On the dark rivers, long, shadowy processions of lighted barges were creeping over the waters, bearing coal from northern West Virginia, a hundred miles away. She was looking directly into the industrial heart of America.

The following noon, the Beavers put her on a Greyhound bus for Columbus where she stayed for a week. While she was there I was attending a sales meeting in Chicago and on Saturday noon flew to Columbus, spending the night in my sisters' home. I told Rie we would add one more episode to her American experience. We would fly to New York.

We left Columbus Sunday morning about nine o'clock and an hour later stepped off in Pittsburgh. The Beavers met us and drove us to their home where we spent an interesting day. Jay Beavers is justly famous for his charcoal-broiled steaks and special steak sauce. They drove us back to the airport about seven o'clock.

In my pocket I had reservations on a TWA Constellation. I wanted Rie to ride a big airliner and to see the lights of Manhattan from the big blue. Dinner was served in flight and soon after eating we landed in Philadelphia—she was entranced by the lights of the big city in which she had recently lived. The night was clear and moonless, perfect for night flying and observation. I did not look out of the window as we picked up the lights of Manhattan. I just watched Rie's face and eyes as she saw the indescribable sight of the lighted metropolis and the outlines of the rivers and harbor below. Just before we swooped onto the apron of La Guardia she said, "Look, Pops, there's the lighted Statue of Liberty."

Perhaps that should have been enough thrills for one day but I added still another. As we stepped into a cab at the airport I told the driver to go directly to Columbus Circle at Broadway and 59th Street. Near that point I told him to drive slowly down Broadway to 38th Street, then to turn around and drive slowly back to Columbus Circle, then over to Grand Central. Thus did Rie see the Great White Way—Broadway, Times Square and the theater district—at night for the first time.

Rie had a busy week in Stamford and New York City after her return from Ohio. Her host of friends wanted to see her before she sailed, and the busy round of gay parties, dinners, and "social whirl" she experienced when she arrived in America was repeated. In between she sandwiched a bit of sewing. She is an expert with needle and shears and she made four dresses from materials we had waiting for her.

Paul drove down from Boston for the week end and what a wonderful time they had together! It was perfect, mellow, Indian Summer weather. They spent much time on the beach at nearby Old Greenwich, Connecticut. I shiver when I think of how much time they spent in the surf. They loved it, even though I would shun North Atlantic waters like a plague on any October first. Love in bloom and youth! It was after midnight Sunday when Paul started the drive home for the Monday-morning opening of the Boston wool trade.

Tuesday, October 17, 1950, was a perfect Indian Summer day. The warm sun tempered the crisp, cool air, raising the temperature to the comfortable low seventies. There was a pungent fragrance to the air from burning leaves. Blue haze shaded the landscape and seascape horizons. The sombre red and mahogany leaves remaining on the trees, mixed with the dark evergreen trees, made a pretty picture on the wooded hills. The sunlight spread a golden Indian Summer tent over everything. This was Rie's sailing day for her North Sea island home. The "Jessie Maersk" would sail from the Brooklyn Basin on the late-afternoon outgoing tide.

The previous evening Paul had come down from Boston to remain overnight in Stamford, and next morning the two young people took a commuters' express train to New York. Pops and

Nannie left later, driving directly to the pier in Brooklyn, the car jammed to capacity with luggage and packages. We were all scheduled to meet at the boat at noon.

Rie had to see John Cassam for final clearance papers. She also closed out her Chase National Bank savings account to turn her savings over to Nannie, so they would be liquid in case she needed them quickly while in Holland. Paul was alert and, with a lover's finesse, took Rie to Brentano's to select books for ship reading. Then they visited a flower shop in Rockefeller Center for a beautiful orchid corsage and Paul arranged for red roses to be delivered to her cabin on the ship.

Pops and Nannie reached the ship first and located the steward, who sent a crewman to unload the car and set the luggage and packages out on the deck. Not included was Rie's one Dutch valise, which, she had told the custom's officer upon her arrival on the "Queen Elizabeth," contained all "my possessions," as this had long since been discarded. Her new luggage consisted of many fine pieces that would delight the most fastidious American woman—thanks to Clarence Clark, who is in the leather goods business. Her wardrobe and accessories were equally complete. There were extra grips tightly packed with wearing apparel and other gifts for Hannie, Aly, and Tieneke, her brothers, and her father. John Cassam had arranged for all her luggage, except what she needed on shipboard, to go directly through to Rotterdam.

So each piece was put away and the steward had arranged Paul's long-stemmed red roses in her cabin when Paul and Rie reached the pier. They had taxied over from mid-Manhattan via the Battery Tunnel.

The "Jessie Maersk" is a new ship, modern from stem to stern, and trim and shapely as a yacht. A large, white, seven-pointed star, the Maersk Line's house mark, is painted on a sky-blue background, on the bow of the light-gray hull and also on the smokestack. The same housemark appeared on the house-flag flying from the stern. The superstructure is painted white and is spotless from constant scrubbing. Adjacent to the Captain's quarters are four staterooms, modern and simply furnished. These are used by officers of Moller ships, who have

earned home leave after long service on ships on the Far Eastern runs that rarely, if ever, touch Danish waters and the home port of Copenhagen. The ships of the Moller Lines transport tremendous tonnage of strategic, and now critical, materials from the Far East to America—rubber, tin, jute, etc.

On the eastbound run of the "Jessie Maersk" bound from New York to Le Havre, Antwerp, and Rotterdam in October 1950, there were thirty-four men and a Dutch girl—a crew of thirty and four officers from the Far Eastern service. Rie's place at Captain Kristoffersen's table was set at his right. The officers and cabin boys vied with one another to make her trip comfortable and interesting. She was considered precious cargo of the United States Rubber Company and her welfare was a special command from the Moller Steamship offices in New York and Copenhagen. When Rie came aboard, several of the officers joined Pops and Nannie on deck to meet her. She was a pretty sight, wearing her gorgeous orchid, a beautiful brown leather bag hanging from one shoulder, a kodak in a brown leather case from the other shoulder, and carrying a portable radio. The steward had already invited Nannie and Pops to share the noon meal and it was a delightful occasion. One of the Danish dishes was entirely new to us. It was a piping-hot soup course. Generous bowls were placed on our service plates by a young Danish boy, who followed with a huge tureen almost too big for him to handle. With one dip of a large ladle, he filled each bowl with a pale yellow, thick soup containing raisins. It was simply delicious. My curiosity got the best of me so I asked how it was made and they told me—buttermilk and raisins. Rie spoke up and told us this dish is considered a dessert in her home, except they had no raisins to add a touch of flavor.

After lunch we stood on the bridge watching the Manhattan skyline across the bay. Something about the golden Indian Summer day made distances deceptive. The tall buildings in the financial section across the blue water of the Brooklyn Basin seemed only a few blocks away, yet they were several miles distant. Ships moving into their slips or headed out to sea, shuttling ferries and tugs passing in front of the skyscraper backdrop made a fascinating panorama. But Nannie and Pops

did not tarry long. That's where we left Paul and Rie to spend their last few hours alone before sailing time.

The trip across was a stormy one and eleven days elapsed between New York and Le Havre. Rie was seasick for about three days before she would accept the advice of the Danish sailors, after which she developed seasoned sea legs and thoroughly enjoyed the decks, the bridge, look-out spots and the fine Danish food served five times a day from breakfast 'til 10:00 P.M. Being an unusually gifted linguist, she could join the Danish conversation long before they reached the shores of France. In her cabin she had a half bushel of choice, select New Hampshire McIntosh apples we brought down when we returned from Lake Sunapee, also a basket of Gouda cheeses—a favorite combination for her snacks—American opulence to Rie.

She disembarked at Le Havre with the assurance of the officers that she would have no difficulty with Dutch customs when she picked up her luggage in Rotterdam a few days after she reached home—these Danish sailors call regularly at the principal Dutch port of Rotterdam. From there she took a train at Le Havre for Paris and Holland.

Rie returned to the island unannounced, as she had not written her family of her plan to leave the ship at Le Havre. As I expected, the natives of Goeree-en-Overflakkee, other than her family and close friends, were critical, suspicious, and perhaps a bit envious of her American ways, especially her clothes and make-up. The oldsters thought she had gone to the devil and the youngsters, reflecting their parents' narrowmindedness, were obvious in their calls and remarks. She feared it might be embarrassing to her girl friends to be with them on the streets of the village. She wrote, "I am having a little trouble being an American on the island. They point their fingers at my slacks and lipstick and say and think mean things. The old men turn their heads and the old women peer from behind their lace curtains and watch every move I make. But I have decided to be the American way and let them think the worst. It seems funny that even the old ladies want to see my different lipsticks, perfumes, cologne, bath articles, shoes, nylon underwear and pocketbooks." So it goes—the eternal feminine will batter down

the barriers of prejudice, bigotry, and intolerance to get a peek into a box of feminine, capricious wiles. She wrote that nothing had changed, "the same muddy roads, the cold winter rains and low leaden clouds, the house cold like a refrigerator with only one little stove in the living room, the heavy food, supperbread dipped in bacon fat, the gravy made with half a pound of lard, no fresh or canned fruit we can afford, no salads, mostly meat of the pig and one boiled vegetable like cabbage or salted beans mixed with the potatoes. I miss my fruit and eggs for breakfast—all we can afford is one egg on Sunday, etc., etc." I think, more than food, she missed the luxury of a bathroom.

She had many talks with her father about Paul and about returning to America to live. He accepted Paul cautiously but understandingly. Only on one point did they clash and on this one two strong Dutch wills met head-on. It almost reached the point of bitterness and some hasty words afterwards regretted. "You can be missed from the home," her father told her, "but I see no reason for you to return to America in January when you are needed here longer and can wait until June." This was the status of affairs before Paul decided to fly to Holland. The Korean situation had worsened since her departure from America and I put pressure on her in my letters to make the break in January. Finally, John Cassam and I made the decision in New York, and John booked her on the "Robert Maersk" leaving Rotterdam on February 15th.

SEVENTEEN

Paul Flies to Holland

At 5:00 P.M. on January 25, 1951, the "Yankee Clipper" rolled into Boston's South Station. Paul met me, and stepping into the taxi, he said, "Algonquin Club." My eyebrows raised as I remarked, "The Algonquin Club has never been on my Boston dinner list." Paul replied, "My boss wants us to be his guests, alone, at his club, have dinner at his favorite table, served by his favorite waiter, then relax in the library." A fine, understanding boss, don't you think?

Club life in Boston is a thing above and apart from similar existence in any other city on the face of the earth. What a delightful experience, the Algonquin Club, with the best food, the handsomest mid-Commonwealth Avenue location, and the finest lilacs on its lawn tended by the doorman, Frank; and within the Algonquin flourishes Boston's unimpeachable circle of gourmets, the Beacon Society. Here, half lost in huge old leather chairs in the quiet library, we talked for four hours; rather, Paul talked, as I listened with my biggest ears and watched his animated Irish face and eyes and his expressive hands.

In the cab on the way to the club I was thinking about the last time I had seen Paul. It was on a mid-afternoon a fortnight or so earlier. Joseph Leeder, from Columbus, had been in New York City and he came to my office to meet Paul, who was flying in from Boston for his connection with the Royal Dutch Airlines, KLM Flying Dutchman Constellation to Holland. I

took Paul and Joe Leeder to John Cassam's office to meet John, who got out his voluminous file marked "Rie de Vos" and briefed Paul on the details of Rie's plans to return to America.

The Flying Dutchman was scheduled to depart from Idlewild Airport at 6:00 P.M. Time was running out for Paul to make his bus connection for the field. As he put on his hat to depart from my office he said, "Pops, where can I pick up a couple of packages of frozen strawberries to take over to Rie?" That caught me flat-footed for a moment. So, grabbing my hat I said to Paul and Joe, "Follow me." I took them underground to the Rockefeller Center Information Bureau in the R.C.A. Building and put the frozen-strawberry question to an attendant, telling him the KLM bus location on Fifth Avenue and telling him that time was the essence. Without a second's hesitation he said, "The closest and surest is a shop, one door east of Park Avenue on Forty-Fifth Street." Paul made it on the run while Joe Leeder stood guard by the Idlewild bus and held it for a few minutes until Paul came up, panting, with his packages of frozen strawberries destined for the North Sea island of Goeree-en-Overflakkee. The tall, charming, pretty Dutch stewardess put the strawberries in the plane's refrigerator and safely carried them overseas in their solid frozen state. I am sure she understood their importance more from the look in Paul's eyes than by what he told her.

As Paul told me the story of his two weeks in Holland I could visualize the big, gleaming silver Constellation standing on the Idlewild apron. This Flying Dutchman was named "Tilburg" after the great Dutch textile city. The ship was no more than half filled with about thirty passengers, Dutch predominating. I could see the winter-evening lights of Manhattan fade away as the plane soared away in the direction of Newfoundland on its circle flight across the North Atlantic. Three hours later the last lights of North America faded behind as they passed over Halifax at an altitude of fifteen thousand feet. Cocktails were served, followed by a miniature Dutch smörgasbord of cold salmon, sardines, egg with tomatoes, asparagus, Edam and Gouda cheese, and champagne. The dinner consisted

of veal chops with potatoes and salad, a dry wine to aid the digestion, topped off with brandy and coffee.

After a few hours of sleep, losing five hours through the time zones, they landed in Shannon, Ireland, for breakfast and refueling. The "old sod" had a special meaning for Paul whose father is a grand Irishman and of course Paul sent his father an Irish card from the "Land of the Shamrock." Breakfast consisted of good ham and eggs and terrible coffee and was served by pretty Irish colleens. It was a perfectly beautiful morning in Ireland and Paul was sparkling like a blue diamond by comparison with a weary, dyspeptic, English passenger who mixed his salts in water across the breakfast table from Paul. From Ireland it is not far, in time measure, by Constellation to Holland.

During World War II, Holland's principal airport, Schipol, located midway between Rotterdam and Amsterdam, was pulverized and destroyed by the German Luftwaffe. After the war, the Dutch engineers rebuilt Schipol into one of the world's most modern air fields. Located between Holland's two largest cities, it serves all of tiny Holland for large commercial airlines.

The Flying Dutchman circled over Amsterdam, with its red-tiled roofs. Out from the city was a geometric pattern of canals and irrigation ditches separating the fields. The panorama, dotted by windmills, is as flat as a billiard table and green as its felt cover, even in January. The Flying Dutchman was ahead of schedule and Rie had not reached the airport when the plane made a graceful landing. With the other passengers Paul lined up beside the Customs and Immigration counter.

The Dutch officers are young, keen, intelligent, friendly men. Paul was among the first to be processed. To the first few rapid-fire questions he grinned and said, "I just flew over from Boston to see my Dutch girl." That was the magic password and, with broad smiles, the courteous officers literally hung the key to Holland around the young man's neck.

Paul did not have long to wait. When Rie realized the plane had landed, she ran through Schipol, with the speed and grace of a deer. Straight into his arms she ran. Many people of many nations in the busy airport paused to watch the pretty Dutch

girl and the handsome American in tight embrace. The happy reunion was a tingling experience for the fortunate spectators.

There were three in Rie's party from the island to meet Paul, and they planned to remain overnight in Amsterdam. They drove to the city through the early winter darkness—along wide streets, all buildings built of brick, lights on in the shop windows, clean, sparkling food shops, streets filled with hundreds of bicycles. It was the closing hour for business, and bicycles came in solid phalanx down the streets, all with tiny headlights—sixteen to twenty cycles abreast—backed up for half a mile at traffic signal stops. They celebrated Paul's arrival with a sumptuous dinner at the Brassiere de Bok, one of Holland's famous eating places.

In the morning they drove through a pouring cold rain; through The Hague and through the tunnel under the Rhine River into Rotterdam. Leaving Rotterdam to the south, the road to the ferry became narrow and rough until it became a one-lane highway. Pedestrians and cyclists have to jump to the side of the road at the sound of an auto horn. Under the weeping, dull sky the countryside seemed desolate.

The road runs so close to the front doors of the houses people must look both ways before opening their doors. Finally the road winds up short; there are steep grades to the top of the dyke and a sharp turn down off the dyke to the dripping ferry. As they climbed down the narrow ramp onto the ferry they saw the slip full of crunching ice rubbing the side of the boat. The passengers sit in a tiny cabin "fore." A pot-bellied, ruddy coal stove keeps the cabin snug and warm. There were only four other passengers going to the island—a man, woman, and a small boy and girl—cute little Dutch children like you see in pictures. As the ferry moves out on the slow swells of the North Sea to cross the Channel to Goeree-en-Overflakkee, the engineer comes around with coffee and cookies. The ferry trip took about a half hour and at the island landing Rie pointed out the village of Ooltgensplaat to Paul, some miles distant, on the wet, grey, flat horizon. Distances and horizons in below-sea-level Holland are deceiving. It is difficult to discern where the dykes separate the North Seascape. They drove down a long, straight narrow road to the

village—not a tree in sight—nothing but muddy fields on both sides of the road.

Ooltgensplaat! This was the end of the rainbow that started in Boston. All the stores and houses are built of brick with red tile roofs. There was a strong current of curiosity and excitement running through the village. Only the youngsters were abroad to wave and call a welcome to the American in their midst. But you can be sure the oldsters were peering over their spectacles, poised on the end of their long thin noses, from behind their curtained windows, to size up the strange young man from a faraway, fabulous land. Most homes have mirrors on the outside of the windows so that people who sit behind the lace curtains can see in both directions. Paul tells me this is quite common in Holland.

They stopped in front of a small brick house. I visualize it as being something like a small country house, with what we would know in America as an unfinished attic. On the green front door is a name plate with the de Vos name on it. Paul felt an instant welcome as he entered the simple home of Vader de Vos. There were genuine Dutch smiles and a warm welcome from all.

Beyond the small entry, behind the front door, is the front living room with its single electric bulb over the table which stands between the two windows. A part of one wall is covered with a large bookcase. Vader de Vos is a great reader and student of good Dutch books and Dutch translations. Over and over again he has read one of his choice books, Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe*. His discriminating choice of books is amazing, considering his educational limitations. In one corner of this living room, hanging from the ceiling, were several hams and slabs of bacon from the de Vos pig, slaughtered in the late fall. This decoration, a form of thankfulness, is quite common in simple Dutch homes. On the left-hand wall is an old fashioned buffet and a door leading to the kitchen. The other wall has a door concealing the pantry. Linoleum covers the cold floor; faded wallpaper is on the walls. Lace curtains are at the windows; everything is spotless and in perfect order. Here in

this living room the large family eats during the winter as this is the only room in the entire house with heat—a small coal stove with isinglass windows doing yeoman duty through the long, cold, damp North Sea Winters.

The kitchen is small—the floor is bare and icy cold—with a coal-burning stove without an oven for cooking, a soapstone sink, one cold-water tap. The drain from this empties into a drainage ditch at the rear of the house. One of Johan's daily chores is to keep this drain clear and this greatly irks the youngster, but Dutch cleanliness is next to Dutch Godliness and the Islanders carry their religion and cleanliness to great extremes. Here in this soapstone sink all the family wash and the men shave. Many towels for the many de Vos' hang on a rack on the kitchen wall; they never dry completely in the chill, damp North Sea Winters. The de Vos home is below sea level and you look over the dykes to see the faraway seascape meet the horizon.

Off the kitchen is what they call the cellar. It is dug deep and about the size of a large closet. Made of cement, the North Sea water seeps in insidiously—several inches overnight. One of Hannie's jobs, inherited from Rie, is to mop up and dry this so-called refrigerator. This explains further Rie's cruelly punished, winter hands she brought to America in February, 1950.

Outside the kitchen door are left many pairs of muddy klompens (wooden shoes), a pair for each of the de Vos family —they all wear klompens. You can't walk or work outdoors on the island without klompens. Only the one, short main street has curbstones and sidewalks, all other streets are paved with cobblestones or bricks, with puddles in low spots. If you step off you are in the muddy fields, and the field workers leave enormous amounts of mud on the cobblestones during the wet winter months. This is not the result of uncleanliness, it just can't be otherwise.

There is another room on the first floor off the kitchen, Vader de Vos' bedroom, unheated of course. These simple, sturdy folks do not know the luxury of modern American homes. They thrive in the same chilling, damp, rugged weather that plagued our "Mayflower" Pilgrim ancestors when they put down winter roots on Cape Cod.

Steep, narrow tread stairs lead to the attic rooms. Here all the windows are open, even in winter. The first small room is merely a rough loft room with seeds and farm tools about. Johan sleeps in a corner, and has plastered his slanting walls with pictures of airplanes and automobiles. Two small rooms open off this storeroom, each with a steep, slanting roof overhead. The front room is the bedroom for Wim, Rens, Marius, and Bram—Kryn was absent attending the University in Leyden. Rie, Hannie, Ally, and Tineke shared the other small attic bedroom. When you wake up on cold winter mornings in these bedrooms you find a deposit of ice and white hoarfrost on the steep, slanting roof immediately over your head. This is caused by the quiet night breathing of the sleeper. Windows, only one in each of these tiny bedrooms, are wide open to the cold, damp North Sea winds. How otherwise could the many sleepers in so small a space get ventilation? Perhaps one compensation for three in a bed is obvious—they can use each other for foot warmers. There are no electric lights in these attic bedrooms, you use kerosene lamps or candles. Remember, too, it was in this tiny, "too many girls" bedroom, that Rie spent many cold hours in bed with her sisters, studying late at night by a kerosene lamp atop a pile of books on a box.

Paul described the family meals, presided over by Vader de Vos. Here, with his children gathered around him, you get a true perspective of Rie's father. Subdued, but not broken, by the ordeal of war and the loss of his beloved wife, he has held fast to his faith in God, and by example and precept seeks to add the leaven his children miss from their good mother. Thus does he read briefly from his Dutch Scriptures and offer a simple prayer when the family is gathered around the table. He is both a loving and a firm father and the firmness is again a compensating factor because his children are motherless. Yet it is a happy family, full of good fun, laughter, pranks and song. Mr. de Vos is probably one of the best-informed men on the island. Despite his many limitations, he keeps abreast of world events through his radio, supplemented by a newspaper, and his considerable reading of good books.

At long last they again have enough to eat to satisfy their

hunger, but it is still an unbalanced Spartan diet by American standards. They lack variety and woefully lack food value balance. Strange, in a dairy land of butter and cheese, they should lack for dairy products—but these essentials must be exported to get dollars to support their economy. Now they enjoy the luxury of one egg each, almost every week, a treat for Sundays. Only the rich can afford to eat chicken, except on rare festive occasions. They did not have a fatted calf to kill when Paul arrived but they gave the next best they had—a chicken was killed and boiled for eleven hungry folks to feast upon. Fresh fruits or vegetables in the winter months are luxuries beyond their means. Frozen fruits, juices, and vegetables are unknown. Most of their menus consist of boiled combinations, with but seldom any variations or extras that would be routine for Americans but indulgence and extravagance for them. Their main courses consist of potatoes, always many potatoes, meat—mostly from the pig—gravy and one other vegetable such as cabbage or cauliflower.

For Paul's feast of boiled chicken, boiled potatoes, and cauliflower mashed together and mixed with the chicken gravy, they had the most unusual dessert—frozen strawberries flown across the Atlantic from New York's Fifth Avenue to their North Sea island. Fresh frozen strawberries? They could not believe their bewildered eyes. They had one extra plate not used for the dinner. It was Kryn's, who could not leave the University at Leyden for Paul's arrival. So Rie served Paul's helping of strawberries on Kryn's clean plate that looked no cleaner than the ten other dinner plates.

Rie had told us there is one hotel in the village. Paul asked Rie to make reservations for him at Mevouw Vinke's hotel in Ooltgensplaat and this is where he slept and had his breakfasts. The hotel, connected with the tavern, has one transit bedroom, but Paul assured me this is ample to accommodate the occasional traveling salesmen or tourist, who rarely remain overnight in the village. The hotelkeeper and his wife are cheerful folks and they were delighted to have a guest from America.

Paul's room was furnished with a bed that folds against the wall, a table, a chair and one candle—no electric light—located

on the second floor at the front and shining with Dutch cleanliness. The temperature in the winter is always bitter cold, damp and clammy as there is no direct or indirect heat in the room.

Paul described a typical night and breakfast at Mevouw Vinke's hotel. He entered the tavern door, a man's place. Outside the door were the exact number of muddy klompens to fit the patrons. A small bar and a few tables and chairs completely fill this "cocktail lounge." The room is cold and damp and only the body heat of the patrons moderates the temperature. He made his way up the stairs in the inky darkness by feeling his way. With the light of his candle he removed his shoes and set them outside the door to be cleaned of the mud picked up from the cobblestone streets, then undressed, quickly blew out the candle and jumped in bed to shiver for a few minutes under the generous supply of blankets, before falling asleep.

He was stirred from his sleep in the morning by a sound like the clop-clop of steel-shod horses but as he became fully awake he realized the clatter was from the klompens of the villagers walking to work over the cobblestones. He had to light his candle in the morning darkness to dress.

He breakfasted alone at a table set under a gas light in the hotelkeeper's parlor, which is the only heated room in the hotel-tavern-home. He was furnished a princely breakfast, something very special for the American, one fried egg with bacon and tea kept hot over an alcohol burner. He was Mevouw Vinke's honored guest for five nights and five breakfasts and his hotel bill amounted to fifteen guilders—about four American dollars.

Teun van Kempen, son of the rich farmer on the island, extended himself to show Paul all parts of Holland—city life and country life. They visited the universities attended by Rie's brothers. They visited the several art galleries where Paul was shown the paintings of the famous old Dutch masters—Rembrandt, Hals, Vermeer, and others. He returned to America with a feeling of understanding of the background and spirit of Holland, captured from these magnificent, historic, somber paintings.

They visited friends of Rie's in the farming section near Brabant, headquarters for the Dutch "underground" during the war. She met these people during the war evacuation period on

the German border. This is another cross-section to fill in the pattern of Dutch home life, missed entirely by tourists. The measure of values is by comparison. The de Vos home is modern and convenient compared with a farm home visited near Brabant. Here lives a fine, large, sturdy, intelligent family. They have not fared so well since the war. Their existence is Spartan and frugal. There is no heat in this home except a cookstove—there is no cold-water tap. They carry their water a considerable distance. They have neither electricity nor gas. There is not even a passable road into the farm during the wet season. There are no newspapers or radios in most homes. Social life consists of visiting and gossiping and the church. The girls in this family lack the clothes and make-up considered a part of feminine beauty in America. But when Paul described the faces of these girls they became alive, and I could see the most beautiful Dutch women painted in oil on the canvases of the old Dutch masters.

When Paul had told me of his proposed flight to Holland, at lunch in Boston's Ritz-Carlton Hotel in December, 1950, I was not too surprised. Love is impetuous, you know. I had known it would mean much to Rie to have Paul meet her father and brothers and sisters, and it would mean much to Paul, too. Not being able to visit the island myself, I welcomed the possibility of seeing things through Paul's American eyes. Outside of Rie's immediate family, I was most interested in her grandmother, Marie Buth, for whom she was named. I sense a most interesting and fascinating story in the generations of Buths, going back into early Dutch history, and some day I will trace it back. In the meantime, I have Paul's impressions of Rie's grandmother.

Marie Buth has lived to a ripe old age and has a strong, beautiful old Dutch face. She wears her matriarch's white lace cap like a regal crown of royalty, and her good influence is strong among the several generations and families of Buth blood living on the island. Unlike too many old people, she does not live in the past, but has a sparkling interest in the present. From what Rie had told me, I was particularly interested in how she would accept the young man from America. Her keen, merry eyes thoroughly searched the face of the genial Irishman and

before he left she pronounced what she saw as good. She gave him her blessing and now is one of his staunchest allies. Leave it to the Irishmen to win the hearts of the ladies.

The favorite rendezvous of Paul and Rie off the island was the famous Black Sheep in Amsterdam, a fascinating compote of museum, antique gallery, bistro and restaurant. Here they had dinner several evenings and became acquainted with Nicolaas Kroese, proprietor and showman. The quaintness of the place is authentic old Dutch and the waiters are dressed in Volendam costume. The Black Sheep is a small, intimate place on the second floor of an old building built by an ancestor of Nicolaas Kroese in the seventeenth century, a Dutchman by name of Han Janszoon Vijffoliegen. A good way to start the evening is to have a touch of quietly potent Dutch gin called Genever, then grope your way along the one-inch hawser-rope handrails up a steep, narrow stairway to dine on duck with orange or chicken in casserole. The food is excellent, the Dutch folk songs are gay and the instrumental music soothing. What a perfect setting in Amsterdam for Paul and Rie to plan their wedding in Connecticut.

Suddenly I realized I was not in Holland. I was sitting by fading embers in the Algonquin Club listening to Paul tell about his trip. The hour was late and we were alone. I had to catch a midnight train to Providence. Time ran out so quickly we did not have time to talk about plans for the wedding to be held in Stamford on Saint Patrick's Day. As we bundled up to go out into the winter night, on the way to the station and at the gate of the train until they called "all aboard," we discussed the wedding plans in the rough, for Nannie to work out in detail. My face would have been very red had I returned to Stamford without bride and groom and wedding plan details so close to a woman's heart.

EIGHTEEN

And So They Were Married

Purely a coincidence, but interesting—the "Robert Maersk" would sail from Rotterdam one year to the day that Maria left Southampton for America on the "Queen Elizabeth," February 15, 1950. John and I rubbed our hands with satisfaction when that date again appeared on the wheel of fortune. John confirmed the arrangements to Rie and we just hoped this would resolve the problem of the departure date over on the Island. Some time later when Paul stopped to see John Cassam, on the day of his flight to Holland, John told him all papers and procedure for Rie's return had been cleared, except that she would have to call personally at the Rotterdam office of the Consul General of the United States. Paul and Rie did this together and at the same time called at the offices of the Moller Steamship Lines. They found everything in order for Rie's return on the "Robert Maersk." The same evening, in the interesting restaurant, The Black Sheep, they picked their wedding date—Saint Patrick's Day, March 17, 1951.

Paul returned home late in January, and about a week before Rie's sailing date he phoned me from Boston. He was frantic as he told me about an airmail letter he had just received from Rie. The steamship company had notified her of a change in sailing schedules. The "Robert Maersk" would leave Rotterdam February 9th and Rie could not sail so soon. There would not be another Moller cargo ship with suitable cabin space until about the first of March. I tried to calm Paul but was not too

successful. He had phoned Cunard Lines in Boston but they gave him no encouragement about space for sailings from Southampton. Paul said, "Could John Cassam arrange space on one of the 'Queens' if I send you the money?" I told Paul to stop worrying while I carried the problem to John Cassam. I was sympathetic and assured him Rie would get over in plenty of time for the wedding. I thanked him for his genuine and generous offer to pay Rie's passage but explained that would not be necessary. Nannie and Pops would bring their adopted Dutch daughter back. He could do his part after I gave him his bride at the altar on Saint Patrick's Day. I promised to phone him during the day.

Fortunately, John Cassam was in his office and he quickly learned about the changed sailing schedules. Next, he scanned the Marine News section of the *Journal of Commerce*. Then, pushing his glasses high on his forehead, he looked across his desk and said, "I think February 15th is Cinderella's lucky day, let's stick with it."

The following is the one-sided telephone conversation I heard:

JOHN: Hello, Ole—I see your new flagship, "Heina," is scheduled to leave Le Havre for New York on February 15th. How many cabins on the "Heina"—how many passengers booked?—can I have a cabin?

JOHN: No, it would have to be a single occupancy—no, it's a girl from Holland—her name is Cinderella—Yes, a Dutch Cinderella and there are wedding bells.

JOHN: No, Ole, I was never more sober in my life—yes, I am in my office—can't you double up some of the Norwegian brass?—it is really quite important—check your list and call me right back.

Within five minutes Ole Olesen returned the call—

JOHN: Thanks a lot, Ole—no, I can't tell you any more about Cinderella now than her name and address in Holland—no, you will have to wait for the details

until we get together for lunch next week—I will cable the girl and you cable instructions to Consartium Maritime Franco-American, in Paris.

JOHN: Yes, Ole, I plan to attend the Marine Shippers' Dinner at the Waldorf tomorrow night—I'll meet you in the men's bar—no, the story of Cinderella will have to wait until next week—I will bring one of our company people along and then your curiosity will be satisfied.

Once more John Cassam had come to the rescue and I was able to answer Paul's phone call in about an hour. I told him Rie would sail on the "Heina," one of the finest ships flying the Norwegian flag. Thus, too, did we add several more fine Scandinavian folks to our string of good friends.

Captain Alfred Aardahl (commodore of the Mowinckel's Norwegian fleet of merchant ships) met Rie for the first time when she stepped aboard the "Heina" in Le Havre, France. She had no ticket to show but she proudly wore an air of distinction; her pass was the good and respected name of the United States Rubber Company, a name known around the world.

The Mowinckel fleet dates back to near the time of the American Revolution. The masts of their first sailing ships were hewn from the tallest pines on the Norwegian hills. The Mowinckel family has been a powerful force in the land of the midnight sun for many years. More recently, in this generation, Johan Mowinckel was Prime Minister of Norway until his death. Presently, the Mowinckels are once again rebuilding their fleet, after the ravages of World War II, and now have twenty ships circling the globe with more building in Norwegian shipyards. The newest modern ship, their flagship, is the "Heina."

Alfred Aardahl was born in the city of Bergen in Norway and, following Norway's seafaring tradition, first went down to sea in ships to sail before the wind at the youthful teen-age of fifteen. His is the racing, red blood of generations of Norse mariners. Step by step he mastered the science of navigation. His youthful paths were the sea lanes of "the vasty deep." Today he walks the bridge of Mowinckel's flagship "Heina" and

is one of the world's most skilled and respected sea captains. He was a captain of ships of the Allies throughout World War II and lived to prove his charmed life. Twice his ships were torpedoed and sunk by German subs and once he was dragged from the cold, stormy North Atlantic by a corvette after long exposure in the water.

The whole trip was an exciting adventure for Maria. She proudly showed the ship and her cabin to her father when Teun van Kempen drove them from Ooltgensplaat to Paris and Le Havre. This was the first time Abraham de Vos had crossed Holland's borders, a country about the size of tiny Rhode Island. Rie and her father spent a day and a night in Paris. Through a friend of Teun's living in Paris, they found delightful French restaurants and saw the important historic places—the Eiffel Tower, Palais de Versailles, Place de la Concorde, Arc de Triomph with the eternal flame for the Unknown Soldier, the shops along Boulevard Champs Elysées; went to a concert, and had a sampling of Paris nightclubs. Then they took Rie to Le Havre, where her father was greatly impressed with the "Heina" and with his daughter's lovely cabin, so beautifully carpeted and furnished, Norwegian pictures hanging from the walls, and a luxury he had never known—a private bathroom. Father de Vos returned to his isolated North Sea island to breathe life into the faraway places often discussed with his cronies over their long-stemmed pipes and a nip of quietly potent Dutch gin called Genever. You can be sure he told them, too, that Maria was returning to America in proper luxury.

Captain Aardahl had assigned to Rie one of the six lovely passenger cabins, one opening directly on a pretty little private sun deck. The Captain called it the bride's suite—and the sun deck, the rock garden. The sun deck was sheltered by glass and sprinkled with growing cactus plants—a touch of the warm desert on the North Atlantic in the winter.

The passengers were a fine, small group of interesting world travelers. They hailed from Norway, England, France, America, and Canada. The nine-year-old daughter of one of the couples was Rie's constant companion and the Captain joined them often on the deck and the bridge and jumped rope with them.

They had card parties and masquerade parties. The table conversation was spirited and interesting, with sharp flashes of repartee in American and Norwegian between Captain Aardahl, First Officer Helgesen, and Chief Engineer Johanson.

Rie's party for the last night out was planned with meticulous care by the Captain, First Officer, and Chief Engineer. Never was a more sumptuous smörgasbord set out by Scandinavian chefs. The First Officer, dressed in the gay colored costume of an Arabian sheik, enlivened the party with his rapier wit. One of the passengers, an American artist, whose illustrations you often see in magazines, painted a program and menu in full color. The dinner following the smörgasbord was a Norwegian banquet and was followed by dancing and folk songs. Everyone had a delightful time. All the world loves lovers and especially a bride, this time a pretty Dutch girl.

At a well-calculated moment the Captain and the officers invited the guests to the bridge. There the Captain pointed to a location on the far-distant night seascape horizon. They did not have long to wait until the first faint flash of a light beam appeared. America! It was the Sankaty lighthouse, located on a proud eminence on the eastern side of Nantucket Island. Sankaty light is first seen by ships coming from Europe and last seen by ships eastbound from America to Europe. Rie excitedly climbed the ladder to the roof of the wheel-house to better pick up the first light flash from America as the ship changed its course to west by south for New York Harbor.

Monday, February 26, 1951, was an eventful day. Tower-topped Manhattan was in a smiling mood under an early spring sun and scoured blue skies when Paul and I drove in from Connecticut. We were excited and time dragged during the morning in the office. Maria's miracle man, John Cassam, was as pleased as Punch, you could see it in his twinkling eyes. He phoned Ole Olesen and made arrangements for Paul and me to meet him at the Downtown Athletic Club located in the very center of New York's harbor activities. John and Ole had notified Customs and Immigrations of Rie's arrival, for with their "know-how" they can cut red tape with the greatest of ease. Ole had everything perfectly timed.

Out of quarantine sailed the streamlined "Heina" into the Hudson River, into a bay swarming with shipping from the ends of the earth, and woven with flying shuttles of ferry boats; islands and mainland bristled for miles with docks and slips, the tangle of waterways between them arched high with massive bridges, and the awe-inspiring skyline of New York looming rugged and dark against a clear blue background. It was only a matter of ten minutes from the club to the pier and by prearrangement Ole phoned a message to Captain Aardahl just as we left. That was the Captain's cue to take Rie to the foot of the gangplank.

It was about one o'clock when we arrived and the noon meal had just been finished by the passengers and crew. The ship's unloading was well started and the usual organized confusion and noisy pandemonium filled the long pier shed with feverish activity. There is an air of expectancy and irresistible fascination in the unloading of a general merchandise cargo from lands beyond the seas. One always speculates about the contents of the huge steel-strapped boxes and tightly wrapped bales—linens from Ireland, lace from France, watches from Switzerland, olives from Spain, cheese from Holland, wine from the island of Madeira off Portugal. The "Heina" was truly an argosy of great treasure so far as we were concerned.

There was an air of tingling expectancy among the group at the foot of the gangplank, passengers, ship crew, and port officers. As Paul, Ole, and Pops hurried through the pier shed, the suppressed excitement must have been infectious, for the busy longshoremen paused to follow us with their eyes. For a moment the hustle and bustle of the busy pier slowed down. Many eyes were focused on the pretty Dutch girl, tears of happiness streaming down her face, when she found herself in Paul's arms. Other eyes were wet, too, including Pops' and Ole's. My mind raced back a year in time to February 1950 when Rie first arrived in America—both occasions were exciting but to this one something great, something good, had been added. Ole and Captain Aardahl took us aboard the "Heina" to the Captain's quarters, where Rie and Paul were toasted with a hearty Norwegian skoal and, after good-byes were said, we drove to Connecticut.

On the last Sunday before Rie sailed for Holland in October, 1950, she and Paul had attended St. John's Lutheran Church in Stamford. It is a church of Paul's faith and it was here they decided to be married on Saint Patrick's Day, now a little less than three weeks away. The intervening days were filled to overflowing. Stamford buzzed with delightful excitement, for a bride, particularly such a special one, is enough to raise the temperature of the ladies to fever pitch. Up Boston way, sewing machines hummed. The apartment in Nashua, New Hampshire, within commuting distance of Boston, was made ready for the bride and groom. Of course there was much bride's shopping during the days, while the evenings were filled with parties and showers. As usual, these busy days were happy days for all involved. For the third time, Pops would give away a daughter, for Rie will always be a daughter to Pops and Nannie.

While the preparations for the wedding were going on, two letters were received from Rie's father. One of them he asked me to give to Paul. Of course they were written in Dutch. So I sent them for translation to a Dutch lady living in Boston. Mrs. Vandergroen is connected with Boston's Berlitz School of Languages and handles Dutch commercial translations. Her translations of the letters follow:

Ooltgensplaat, Holland
18 February, 1951

Dear Mr. Keller:

I first want to apologize to you for not writing any sooner. After all you have done for Rie and for us all, I must have seemed ungrateful to you. However, through Rie you know about my circumstances, after my wife, the best part of my life, has gone. I have never been the same since and often, after this has happened, I feel as if life is just a heavy burden. My children alone keep me going, mentally. Then there is the atmosphere of the old Europe, to be felt in all of us who are of the older generation. We are so tired, it is as if the centuries just bear down on us. You, with your

American vitality, find this hard to understand, probably, but it is noticeable in all old cultures.

That is why I am so happy that my children, through your kindness, are getting in touch with the effervescent tempo of your country and your people.

I shall never be able to thank you and Nannie enough for all the things you did for Rie and for us all. There are still Hannie and the little Johan. Through your interest and correspondence they improve mentally, in development and intellect. And now Rie has left and is once more on her way to her American friends, and it gives me such a wonderful feeling of security to know that you and all her friends will be there to receive her with your love. Mr. Keller, it is not necessary for me to assure you and Nannie again and again how much I trust and respect you. I already had that faith when at first I advised Rie to visit you and I know that this will never change. It makes me so happy also that you got such a good impression of Paul. Now that we have seen him I can fully well agree with you, he is a fine man. I am absolutely convinced that, if God will, they will be very happy together, and this has lightened considerably our farewell at Rie's departure. Rie told me of your intention, according to American custom, to give her away, at her wedding to Paul. This is a beautiful custom and I, as her father, shall deeply appreciate it, if you will do so. This marriage has my fullest consent. I went with Rie to Le Havre and saw the fine boat she was to sail on and her nice cabin. For that too, my hearty thanks. The book* which you wrote about her and about us, is very nice and I can understand quite a bit of it, although I cannot read it all. I enclose herewith a letter for Paul, which I beg of you to give him. We here in

* Mr. de Vos refers to a little story about Rie, sent to our friends at Christmas time, and which stimulated interest for the "whole story" given in this book.

Holland love to hear from you and are already anxious to know about Rie's arrival. Mr. Keller, please be always convinced of our grateful feelings toward you, Nannie, and all the friends.

Many regards from us all,

A. DE VOS

Ooltgensplaat, Holland
18 February, 1951

DEAR PAUL:

We received your very kind letter this week. I had had it in mind to write you all along, but several things made me postpone it. Now, Rie has gone, and I would like to talk with you a little. Since we have met I have found it entirely right and satisfactory to let her go. During the short time you have been with us, and notwithstanding the fact that, on account of our different languages, we could not converse very easily, you have won my faith. I have seen that you are a man of "good will," and how much you love Rie. Dear Paul, those are the foundations on which to build a good and happy life, together. The love between man and wife is one of the most beautiful and the greatest things God has given to mankind. It tops all other things in the world—wealth, prosperity, etc., etc. It can also be a mighty impulse to make for a better life, especially mentally. If you both hold on to that love, aiming for higher understanding, you will be able to bear all things which life has put in stock for everyone. All this gives me such peace of mind and happiness. I love all my children so dearly, of course Rie, and I have felt all along that with you and your family she has found her life's aim.

And I don't need to tell you that she is worth it, she is such a fine girl.

It has done me a lot of good that I could go with her to Le Havre and thanks to Teun van Kempen everything went wonderfully well. Teun is a fine boy

who, without a doubt, will succeed in America. We have had a few very pleasant days in France. Paris was a revelation for me, a city with a special atmosphere, where you seem to almost feel the invigorating tempo of the French people's minds. We brought Rie aboard the "Heina," and saw what a beautiful, comfortable boat it is. I was so happy for Rie. Please thank Mr. Keller also for this.

And now she is coming to you, Paul, and I know you will receive her, like a gift, one you hold very high. Love her, my boy, and be happy together, this is the burning wish of your, and Rie's,

FATHER

Paul, please give my very best regards to your parents. I shall write them later. Lots of greetings from all the boys and girls—your brothers and sisters.

Well, and then came St. Patrick's Day morning. And it rained. But the weather outside didn't seem to get much attention—inside everyone was happy and gay.

In the little white church the lights gave a soft glow. All brides are beautiful, because they're radiant, but Rie was especially pretty. She wore a navy-blue suit, bought with her own money, a beautiful white blouse, dark shoes, and a small white hat with white flowers. She was wearing, too, the beautiful locket that was a gift from her father and a little gold ring of her mother's. Pops gave her away and was as proud as her own father would have been could he have been there. Carole's father, Mr. Anderson, was best man. The service was short but very impressive and lovely. Rie was weeping and trying to smile all at the same time as she turned from the altar.

The children's choir had been rehearsing that morning before the wedding and they had asked if they might stay to see the bride. So they sat upstairs and afterward lined up outside. The sun was just trying to come through the clouds as Rie and Paul came out of the church.

Then we all went to the picturesque Chimney Corners Inn for the wedding luncheon. Of course there was a cake for the

bride to cut, toasts were drunk, and then it was time for Rie and Paul to start out on their honeymoon.

And so this story has the perfect ending. Proof again that truth is stranger than fiction and facts are better than dreams. All that Nannie and Pops put into this exciting and unusual experience came back to us in good measure, pressed down and running over. Rie and Paul are living "happily forever after," and looking toward the day when Rie's father and brothers and sisters will also come to America.